THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST AS AN ADVOCATE

john bunyan

The Work of Jesus Christ As An Advocate

HOUSTON GRADUATE SCHOOL
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author of

"PILGRIM'S PROGRESS"

"HOLY WAR"

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BUNYAN'S CONSOLING WORKS.

ISRAEL'S HOPE ENCOURAGED:

THE WORK OF Jesus Christ as an Advocate EXPLAINED:

THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE:

AND

THE WATER OF LIFE.

BY JOHN BUNYAN.

AUTHOR OF THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, AND THE HOLY WAR.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.—Isa. xl. 1.

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THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST AS AN ADVOCATE

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THE AUTHOR'S

EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

Of all the excellent offices which God the Father has conferred on Jesus Christ our Lord, this of his being an Advocate with him for us is not the least; though (to the shame of saints it may be spoken) the blessed benefits thereof have not with that diligence and fervent desire been inquired after as they ought.

Christ, as a sacrifice, Priest, and King, with the glories in, and that flow from him, as such, has, God be thanked, in this our day been much discovered by our seers, and as much rejoiced in by those who have believed their words. But as he is an Advocate with the Father, an Advocate for us, I fear the excellency of that doth still too much lie hid; though I am verily of opinion, that the people of God in this age have as much need of the knowledge thereof, (if not more need,) than had their brethren that are gone before them.

These words, "if not more need," perhaps may seem to some to be somewhat out of joint. But let the godly wise consider the decays that are among us, as to the power of godliness, and what abundance of foul miscarriages the generality of professors now stand guilty of, (as also how diligent their great enemy is to accuse them at the bar of God for them,) and I think they will conclude, that in so saying, I, indeed, have said some truth. Wherefore, when I thought on this, and had somewhat considered also the

transcendent excellency of the advocateship of this our Lord; and again, that but little of the glory thereof has by writing been in our day communicated to the church, I ventured to write what I have seen thereof, and do by what doth follow present it unto her for good.

I count not myself sufficient for this, or any other truth as it is in Jesus; but yet I say, I have told you somewhat of it, according to the proportion of faith. And I believe some will thank God for what I here have said about it; but it will be chiefly those whose right and title to the kingdom of heaven and glory doth seem to themselves to be called in question by their enemy, at the bar of the Judge of all.

These, I say, will read and be glad to hear that they have an Advocate at court that will stand up to plead for them, and that will yet secure to them a right to the heavenly kingdom. Wherefore it is more particularly for those that at present, or that hereafter may be in this dreadful plight, that this my book is now made public; because it is, as I have showed, for such that Jesus Christ is Advocate with the Father.

Of the many and singular advantages, therefore, that such have by this their Advocate, in his advocateship for them, this book gives some account; as where he pleads, how he pleads, what he pleads, when he pleads, with whom he pleads, for whom he pleads, and how the enemy is put to shame and silence before their God and all the holy angels.

Here is also showed to those herein concerned, how they indeed may know that Jesus is their Advocate; yea, and how their matters go before their God, the Judge; and particularly, that they shall come off well at last, yea, though their cause (as it is theirs) is such, in justification of which themselves do not dare to show their heads.

Nor have I left the dejected souls without directions how to entertain this Advocate to plead their cause. Yea, I have

also shown that he will be with them named by him. Their comfort also is, that he never left a cause, nor a soul, for whom he undertook to be an Advocate with God.

But, Reader, I will no longer detain thee from the perusal of the discourse. Read and think, read and compare what thou readest with the word of God. If thou findest any benefit by what thou readest, give the Father and the Son the glory; and also pray for me, if thou findest me short in this, or to exceed in that. Impute all such things to my weakness, of which I am always full. Farewell

I am thine, to serve thee what I may,

JOHN BUNYAN.

THE WORK OF

JESUS CHRIST AS AN ADVOCATE, EXPLAINED.

CHAPTER I.

THINGS PRESUPPOSED IN THE TEXT.

AND IF ANY MAN SIN, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS.—1 JOHN II. 1.

THAT the apostle might obtain due regard from those to whom he wrote, touching the things about which he wrote, he tells them that he received not his message to them at second or third hand, but was himself an eye and ear witness thereof. "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you."

Having thus told them of his ground for what he said, he proceeds to tell them also the matter contained in his errand, namely, that he brought them news of eternal life, as freely offered in the word of the gospel to them; or rather that the gospel which they had received would certainly usher them in at the gates of the kingdom of heaven, were their reception of it sincere and in truth. For (saith

he) then "the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth us from all sin."

Having thus far told them what was his errand, he sets upon the explication of what he had said, especially touching our being cleansed from all sin. 'Not (saith he) from a being of sin; for should we say so, we should deceive ourselves, and should prove that we have no truth of God in us. But by cleansing, I mean a being delivered from all sin, so as that none at all shall have the dominion over you, to bring you down to hell: because for the sake of the blood of Christ all trespasses are forgiven you.'

This done, he exhorts them to shun or fly sin, and not to consent to the motions, enticings, or allurements thereof, saying, "I write unto you, that you sin not." 'Let not forgiveness have so bad an effect upon you, as to cause you to be remiss in Christian duties, or to tempt you to give way to evil. Shall we sin because we are forgiven? Or shall we not much matter what manner of lives we live, because we are set free from the law of sin and death? God forbid. Let grace teach us another lesson, and lay other obligations upon our spirits.' "My little children." saith he, "these things, I write unto you, that ye sin not." What things? Why, tidings of pardon and salvation, and of that nearness to God to which you are brought by the precious blood of Christ. Now, lest also by this last exhortation, he should yet be misunderstood, he adds, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I say, he addeth this to prevent desponding in those weak and sensible Christians that are so quick of feeling, and of discerning the corruptions of their natures; for these cry out continually, that there is nothing that they do, but it is attended with sinful weaknesses.

Wherefore in the words we are presented with two great truths.

1. With a supposition that men in Christ, while in this

world, may sin. "If any man sin:" any man; none are excluded; for all, or any of the all of them that Christ hath redeemed and forgiven are incident to sin. By *may*, I mean not a toleration, but a possibility; for there is not a man, not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not. Eccl. vii. 20; 1 Kings viii. 46.

2. The other thing with which we are presented, is an Advocate. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, in Jesus Christ, the righteous."

Now there lieth in these two truths two things to be enquired into. As, 1. What the Apostle here means by sin? 2. And also what he here doth mean by an Advocate: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate." There is ground to enquire after the first of these; because though here he saith, they that sin have an Advocate, yet in the very next chapter he saith, such are of the devil, have not seen God, neither know him, nor are of him. There is ground also to enquire after the second, because an Advocate is supposed to be of use to them that sin: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate."

1. For the first of these, namely, what the Apostle here means by sin. "If any man sin."

I answer, since there is a difference in the persons, there must be a difference in the sin. That there is a difference in the persons is showed before; one is called a child of God, the other is said to be of the wicked one. Their sins differ also in their degree at least; for no child of God sins to that degree as to make himself incapable of forgiveness: "But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." 1 John v. 18. Hence the apostle saith, "There is a sin unto death," (chap. v. 16,) which is the sin from which he that is born of God is kept.

The sins therefore are thus distinguished: the sins of the people of God are said to be sins that men commit; the others are those which are counted sins of devils.

First, The sins of God's people are said to be sins that men commit, and for which they have an Advocate, though they who sin after the manner of the wicked one have none. "When a man or woman (saith Moses) shall commit any sin which men commit, they shall confess their sins—and an atonement shall be made for them," Numbers v. 5, 6, 7. Mark, it is when they commit a sin which men commit; or as Hosea has it, when they transgress the commandment like Adam. Hos. vi. 7. Now these are the sins under consideration by the apostle, and to deliver us from which "we have an Advocate with the Father."

But for the sins mentioned in the third chapter, since the persons sinning go there under another character, they also must be of another stamp, namely, a making head against the person, merits, and grace of Jesus Christ. These are the sins of devils in the world; and for these there is no remission. These are they also that are of the wicked one committed, and therefore sin after the similitude of Satan, and so fall into the condemnation of the devil.

2. But what is it for Jesus to be an Advocate for these? "If any man sin, we have an advocate."

An Advocate is one that pleadeth for another at any bar, or before any court of judicature; but of this more in its place. So then we have in the text a Christian, as supposed, committing sin, and a declaration of an Advocate prepared to plead for him; "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father."

And this leads me first to enquire into what, by these words, the apostle must of necessity PRESUPPOSE. For making use here of the similitude or office of an Advocate, thereby to show the preservation of a sinning Christian, he must,

1. Suppose that *God, as Judge, is now upon the throne of his judgment*; for an advocate is to plead at a bar, before a court of Judicature. Thus it is among men; and forasmuch

as our Lord Jesus is said to be "an Advocate with the Father," it is clear, that there is a throne of Judgment also. This the prophet Micah affirms, saying, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand, and on his left;"—1 Kings xxii. 19, 20;—sitting upon a throne for judgment; for from the Lord, as then sitting upon the throne, proceeded the sentence against King Ahab, that he should go and fall at Ramoth-gilead; and he did go, and did fall there as the award, or fruit of that judgment. That is the first.

2. The text also supposeth that *the saints, as well as sinners, are concerned at that bar.* For the apostle saith plainly, that there "we have an Advocate." And the saints are concerned at the bar, because they transgress as well as others, and because the law is against the sins of saints, as well as against the sins of other men. If the saints were not capable of committing sin, what need would they have of an advocate? 1 Chron. xxi. 3–6; 1 Sam. xii. 13, 14. Yea, though they did sin, yet if they were by Christ *so* set free from the law as that it could by no means take cognizance of their sins, what need would they have of an advocate? None at all. If there be twenty places where there are assizes kept in this land, yet if I have offended no law, what need have I of an advocate? especially if the judge be just, and knows me altogether, as the God of heaven does. But here is a Judge that is just, and here is an Advocate also, an advocate for the children of God, an advocate to plead, (for an advocate as such, is not of use, but before a bar to plead;) therefore here is an offence, and so a law broken by the saints as well as others. That is the second thing.

3. As the text supposeth that there is a Judge, and crimes of saints, so it supposeth that *there is an Accuser;* one that will carefully gather up the faults of good men, and that will plead them at this bar against them. Hence

we read of the Accuser of the brethren, that accuseth them before God day and night. Rev. xii. 10, 11, 12. For Satan doth not only tempt the godly man to sin; but having prevailed with him, and made him guilty, packs away to the court, to God the Judge of all, and there addresses himself to accuse that man, and to lay to his charge the heinousness of his offence, pleading against him the law that he has broken, the light against which he did it, and the like. But now, for the relief and support of such poor people, the apostle by the text presents them with an Advocate; that is, with one to plead for them, while Satan pleads against them; with one that pleads for pardon, while Satan by accusing seeks to pull judgment and vengeance upon their heads. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." That is the third thing.

4. As the apostle supposeth a Judge, crimes, and an Accuser, so he also supposeth, *that those herein concerned*, (namely, the sinning children,) *neither can nor dare attempt to appear at this bar themselves*, to plead their own cause before this Judge and against this accuser. For if they could or durst do this, what need have they an Advocate? for an Advocate is of use to them whose cause themselves neither can nor dare appear to plead. Thus Job prayed for an Advocate to plead his cause with God. Job xvi. 20, 21. And David cries out, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O God, for in thy sight no man living shall be justified." Ps. cxliii. 2. Wherefore it is evident that saints neither can, nor dare venture to plead their cause. Alas! the Judge is the Almighty and Eternal God; the law broken is the holy and perfect rule of God, in itself a consuming fire; the sin is so odious, and a thing so abominable, that it is enough to make all the angels blush to hear it but so much as once mentioned in so holy a place as that is, where the great God doth sit to judge. This sin now hangs about the neck of him that hath com-

mitted it, yea, it covereth him as doth a mantle; the adversary is bold, cunning, audacious, and can word a thousand of us into an utter silence in less than half a quarter of an hour. What then should the sinner (if he could come there) do at this bar to plead? Nothing, nothing for his own advantage. But now comes in his mercy; he has an Advocate to plead his cause. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." That is the fourth thing. But again,

5. The apostle also supposeth by the text, that *there is an aptness in Christians, when they have sinned, to forget that they have an Advocate with the Father.* Wherefore this is written to put them in remembrance. "If any man sin, (let him remember,) we have an Advocate." We can think of all other things well enough, namely, that God is a just Judge, that the law is perfectly holy, that my sin is a horrible and abominable thing, and that I am certainly thereof accused before God by Satan. These things, I say, we readily think of, and forget them not. Our conscience puts us in mind of these; our guilt puts us in mind of these; the devil put us in mind of these; and our reason and sense hold the knowledge and remembrance of these close to us. All that we forget is, that we have an Advocate; "an Advocate with the Father:" that is, one that is appointed to take in hand in open court, before all the angels of heaven, my cause, and to plead it by such law and arguments as will certainly fetch me off, though I am clothed with filthy garments. But this, I say, we are apt to forget, as Job, when he said, "Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!" Job xvi. 21. Such a one Job had, but he had almost at this time forgot it; as he seems to intimate also, where he wisheth for a Day's-man that might lay his hand upon them both. (Chap. ix. 33.) But our mercy is, we have one to plead our cause, "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," who will not suffer our soul to be spilt

and spoiled before the throne, but will surely plead our cause.

6. Another thing that the apostle would have us learn from the words is this, That *to remember and to believe that Jesus Christ is an Advocate for us when we have sinned, is the next way to support and strengthen our faith and hope.* Faith and hope are very apt to faint when our sins in their guilt do return upon us; nor is there any more proper way to relieve our souls than to understand that the Son of God is our Advocate in heaven. True, Christ died for our sins as a sacrifice, and as a Priest he sprinkleth with his blood the mercy-seat; aye, but here is one that has sinned grievously, so grievously that his sins are come up before God; yea, are at his bar pleaded against him by the Accuser of the brethren, by the enemy of the godly. What shall he do now? Why, let him believe in Christ. Believe, that is true; but how now must he conceive in his mind of Christ, for the encouraging him so to do? Why, let him call to mind that Jesus Christ is an Advocate with the Father, and as such he meeteth the Accuser at the bar of God, pleads for this man that has sinned, against this accuser, and prevaileth for ever against him. Here now, though Satan be turned lawyer, though he accuseth, yea, though his charge against us is true, (for suppose that we have sinned,) yet our Advocate is "with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Thus is faith encouraged, thus is hope strengthened, thus is the spirit of the sinking Christian revived, and made to wait for a good deliverance from a bad cause and a cunning adversary; especially if you consider,

7. That the apostle doth also further suppose by the text, that *Jesus Christ, as Advocate, if he will but plead our cause, let that be ever so black, is able to bring us off*, even before God's judgment-seat, to our joy, and the confounding of our adversary. For when he saith, "We have an Advocate," he speaks nothing, if he means not thus. But he doth mean

thus, he must mean thus, because he seeketh here to comfort and support the fallen. Has any man sinned? We have an Advocate. But what of that, if yet he be unable to fetch us off when charged for sin at the bar, and before the face of a righteous Judge?

But he is able to do this; the apostle says so, in that he supposes a man has sinned, as any man among the godly ever did; for so we may understand it, and if he giveth us not leave to understand it so, he saith nothing to the purpose neither. For it will be objected by some, 'But can he fetch me off, though I have done as David, as Solomon, as Peter, or the like?' It must be answered, Yes. The openness of the term "any man," the indefiniteness of the word "sin," doth naturally allow us to take him in the largest sense: besides, he brings in this saying as the chief, most apt, and fittest to relieve one crushed down to death and hell by the guilt of sin and a wounded conscience.

Further, methinks, by these words the apostle seems to triumph in his Christ, saying, 'My brethren, I would have you study to be holy: but if your adversary the devil should get the advantage of you, and besmear you with the filth of sin, you have yet, besides all that you have heard already, "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" who is, as to his person and worth, in interest with God's wisdom, able to bring you off to the comfort of your souls.'

Let me, therefore, for a conclusion as to this, give you an exhortation to believe, to hope and expect that though you have sinned, (for now I speak to the fallen saint,) that Jesus Christ will make a good end with thee. Trust, I say, in him, and he shall bring it to pass. I know I put thee upon a hard and difficult task, for believing and expecting good, when thy guilty conscience doth nothing but clog, burden, and terrify thee with the justice of God, and the greatness of thy sins; those burning torments are hard and sweating work. But it must be. The text calls for it, thy case calls for it, and thou

must do it, if thou wouldst glorify Christ. And this is the way to hasten the issue of thy cause in hand; for believing daunts the devil, pleaseth Christ, and will help thee beforehand to sing that song of the church, saying, "O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul, thou hast redeemed my life." Lam. iii. 55–59. Yea, believe, and hear thy pleading Lord say to thee, "Thus saith thy Lord, the Lord and thy God, that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again." Isa. li. 22. I am not here discoursing of the sweetness of Christ's nature, but of the excellency of his offices, and of his office of advocateship in particular, which, as a lawyer for his client, he is to execute in the presence of God for us. Love may be where there is no office, and so where no power is to do us good: but now, when love and office shall meet, they will surely both combine in Christ to do the fallen Christian good. But of his love we have treated elsewhere; we will here discourse of the office of this loving One.

And for thy further information, let me tell thee, that God thy Father counteth that thou wilt be, when compared with this law, but a poor one all thy days; yea, the apostle tells thee so, in that he saith there is an Advocate provided for thee. When a father provides crutches for his child, he doth as good as say, I count that my child will be yet infirm: and when God doth provide an Advocate, he doth as good as say, My people are subject to infirmities. Do not therefore think of thyself above what, by plain texts and fair inferences drawn from Christ's offices, thou art bound to think. What doth it bespeak concerning thee, that Christ is always a priest in heaven, and there ever lives to make intercession for thee, (Heb. vii. 25,) but this, that thou art at the best in thyself, yea, and in thy best exercising of all thy graces too, but a poor, pitiful, sorry, sinful man, a man that would (when yet most holy) be certainly cast away, did not thy

High Priest take away for thee the iniquity of thy holy things. The age we live in is a wanton age. The godly are not so humble, and low, and base in their own eyes as they should be, though their daily experience calls for it, and the priesthood of Jesus too.

But above all, the advocateship of Jesus Christ declares us to be sorry creatures; for that office does as it were predict, that some time or other we shall basely fall, and by falling be undone, if the Lord Jesus stand not up to plead. And as it shows this concerning us, so it shows concerning God, that he will not lightly or easily lose his people. He has provided well for us; blood to wash us in, a priest to pray for us, that we may be made to persevere; and, in case we foully fall, an Advocate to plead our cause, and to recover us from under, and out of the danger that by sin and Satan we at any time may be brought into.

CHAPTER II.

THIS OFFICE OF CHRIST EXPLAINED.

BUT having thus briefly passed through that in the text which I think the apostle must necessarily presuppose, I shall now endeavor to enter into the bowels of it, and see what, in a more particular manner, shall be found therein. And, for my more profitable doing of this work I shall choose to observe this method in my discourse.

I. I shall show you more particularly of this Advocate's OFFICE, or what and wherein Christ's office as Advocate doth lie.

II. After that, I shall also show you how Jesus Christ doth MANAGE this office of an Advocate.

III. I shall also then show you WHO they are, that have Jesus Christ for their Advocate.

IV. I shall also show you what excellent PRIVILEGES they have, who have Jesus Christ for their Advocate.

V. And to silence cavillers, I shall also show the NECESSITY of this office of Jesus Christ.

VI. I shall come to answer some OBJECTIONS; and

Lastly, To the use and APPLICATION.

I. To begin with the first of these, namely, to show you more particularly of Christ's OFFICE as an Advocate, and wherein it lieth; the which I shall do these three ways. 1. Touch again upon the nature of this office; and then, 2. Treat of the order and place that it hath among the offices; and, 3. Treat of the occasion of the execution of this office.

1. To touch upon the NATURE OF THIS OFFICE. It is that which empowereth a man to plead for a man, or one

man to plead for another; not in common discourses, and upon common occasions, as many do, but at a bar, or before a court of judicature, where a man is accused or impeached by his enemy; I say, this Advocate's office is such both here and in the kingdom of heaven. An advocate, is as one of our attorneys, at least in the general, who pleads according to law and justice, for one or other that is in trouble by reason of some miscarriage, or the naughty temper of some that are about him, who trouble and vex, and labor to bring him in danger of the law. This is the nature of this office, as I said, on earth; and this is the office that Christ executes in heaven. Wherefore he saith, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate," one to stand up for him, and to plead for his deliverance before the bar of God. Joel iii. 2; Isa. lxvi. 16; Gen. xviii. 23–33; Jer. ii. 9.

For though in such places of scripture, Christ is said to plead for his with men, and that by terrible arguments as by fire, and sword, and famine, and pestilence; yet this is not intended by this text. For the apostle here saith, he is an Advocate with the Father, or before the Father, to plead for those that there (or that to the Father's face) shall be accused for their transgressions. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous." So then this is the employ of Jesus Christ, as he is for us an Advocate. He has undertaken to stand up for his people at God's bar, and before that great court, there to plead, by the law and justice of heaven, for their deliverance, when for their faults they are accused, indited, or impeached by their adversary.

2. And now to treat of the ORDER or place that this office of Christ hath among the rest of his offices, which he doth execute for us while we are here in a state of imperfection. And I think it is an office that is to come behind, as a reserve, or for an help at last, when all other means shall seem to fail. Men do not use to go to law upon every occa-

sion; or if they do, the wisdom of the judge, the jury, and the court, will not admit that every brangle and foolish quarrel shall come before them; but an advocate doth then come into place, and then to the exercise of his office, when a cause is counted worthy to be taken notice of by the judge, and by the court. Wherefore he, I say, comes in the last place, as a reserve or help at last to plead; and by pleading, to set that right by law which would otherwise have caused an inlet to more doubts and further dangers.

Christ as priest doth always works of service for us; because, in our most spiritual things, there may faults and spots be found, and these he taketh away of course by the exercise of that office; for he always wears that plate of gold upon his forehead before the Father, where is written, "Holiness to the Lord." But now, besides these common infirmities, there are faults that are highly gross and foul, that oft are found in the skirts of the children of God. Now, these are they that Satan takes hold on, these are they that Satan draws up a charge against us for; and to save us from these it is that the Lord Jesus is made an Advocate. When Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. Then the Angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus, pleaded for his help. Zech. iii. By all which it appears, that this office comes behind, is provided as a reserve, that we may have help at a pinch, and then be lifted out, when we sink in mire where there is no standing.

This is yet further hinted at by the several postures that Christ is said to be in, as he exerciseth his Priestly and Advocate's office. As a Priest he sits, as an Advocate he stands. Isa. iii. 13. The Lord stands up when he pleads. His sitting is more constant, and of course, ("Sit thou on my right hand," &c.;) but his standing is occasional, as when Joshua is indited, or when hell and earth are broken loose against his servant Stephen. For as Joshua was accused by

the devil, and as then the Angel of the Lord stood by; so when Stephen was accused by men on earth, and that charge seconded by the fallen angels before the face of God, it is said, the Lord Jesus stood on the right hand of God, (Acts vii. 55;) that is, to plead; for so I take it, because standing is his posture as an Advocate, not as a Priest, for as a Priest he must sit down, (Heb. x.;) but he standeth as an Advocate, as has been showed afore. Wherefore,

3. The OCCASION of his exercising this office of Advocate, is, as has been hinted already, when a child of God shall be found guilty before God of some heinous sin, of some grievous thing in his life and conversation. For as for those infirmities that attend the best in their most spiritual sacrifices, if a child of God were guilty of ten thousand of them, they are of course purged, through the much incense that is always mixed with those sacrifices in the golden censer that is in the hand of Christ; and so he is kept clean and counted upright, notwithstanding those infirmities; and, therefore, you shall find, that notwithstanding those common faults, the children of God are counted good and upright in conversation, and not charged as offenders. "David," saith the text, "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him, all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." 1 Kings xv. 5. But was David in a strict sense without fault in all things else? No, verily: but that was foul in a higher degree than the rest, and, therefore, there God sets a blot; aye, and doubtless for that he was accused by Satan before the throne of God; for here is adultery, and murder, and hypocrisy in David's doings; here is notorious matter, a great sin, and so a great ground for Satan to draw up an indictment against the king! and a thundering one to be sure shall be preferred against him. This is the time then for Christ to stand up to plead; for now

there is room for such a question, Can David's sin stand with grace? or, is it possible that a man that has done as he has, should yet be found a saint, and so in a saved state? or, can God repute him so, and yet be holy and just? or, can the merits of the Lord Jesus reach, according to the law of heaven, a man in this condition? Here is a case dubious; here is a man whose salvation, by his foul offences, is made doubtful; now we must to law and judgment, wherefore now let Christ stand up to plead. I say, now was David's case dubious, (Psalm li.;) he was afraid that God would cast him away, and the devil hoped he would; and to that end charged him before God's face, if perhaps he might get sentence of damnation to pass upon his soul. But this was David's mercy, he had an Advocate to plead his cause, by whose wisdom and skill, in matters of law and judgment, he was brought off from those heavy charges, from those gross sins, and delivered from that eternal condemnation that by the law of sin and death was due thereto.

This is then the occasion that Christ taketh to plead, as Advocate, for the salvation of his people, to wit, the cause: "He pleadeth the cause of his people." Not every cause, but such and such a cause; the cause that is very bad, and by the which they are involved, not only in guilt and shame, but also in danger of death and hell. I say, the cause is bad, if the text be true, if sin can make it bad, yea, if sin itself be bad. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate;" an Advocate to plead for him; for him as considered guilty, and so consequently as considered in a bad condition. It is true we must distinguish between the person and the sin; and Christ pleads for the person, not the sin; but yet he cannot be concerned with the person but he must be with the sin; for though the person and the sin may be distinguished, yet they cannot be separated. He must plead then not for a person only, but for a guilty

person, for a person under the worst of circumstances. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate" for him, as so considered.

When a man's cause is good, it will sufficiently plead for itself, yea, and for its matter too; epecially when it is made appear so to be before a just and righteous Judge. Here, therefore, needs no advocate; the Judge himself will pronounce him righteous. This is evidently seen in Job: "Thou movedst me against him" (this saith God to Satan) "to destroy him without cause." Job ii. 3. Thus far Job's cause was good; wherefore he did not need an advocate; his cause pleaded for itself and for its owner also. But if it was to plead good causes for which Christ is appointed Advocate, then the apostle should have written thus: If any man be righteous, we have an Advocate with the Father. Indeed, I never heard but one in all my life preach from this text, and he, when he came to handle the cause for which he was to plead, pretended it must be good, and, therefore, said to the people, 'See that your cause be good, else Christ will not undertake it.' But when I heard it, 'Lord,' (thought I,) 'if this be true, what shall I do, and what will become of all this people; yea, and of this preacher too?' Besides, I saw that by the text the apostle supposeth another cause, a cause bad, exceeding bad, if sin can make it so. And this was one cause why I undertook this work.

When we speak of a cause, we speak not of a person simply as so considered; for, as I said before, person and cause must be distinguished; nor can the person make the cause good, but as he regulates his actions by the word of God. If then a good, a righteous man, doth what the law condemns, that thing is bad; and if he be indited for so doing, he is indited for a bad cause, and he that will be his advocate must be concerned in and about a bad

matter, and how he will bring his client off, therein doth lie the mystery.

I know that a bad man may have a good cause depending before the judge; and so also good men have. Job xxxi. But then they are bold in their own cause, and fear not to make mention of it, and in Christ to plead their innocency before the God of heaven, as well as before men. Psalm lxxi. 3–5; 2 Cor. i. 23: Gal. i. 30; Phil. i. 8. But we have in the text a cause that all men are afraid of; a cause that the apostle concludes so bad, that none but Jesus Christ himself can save a Christian from it. It is not only sinful, but sin itself. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father."

Wherefore there is in this place handled by the apostle one of the greatest mysteries under heaven, namely, That an innocent and holy Jesus should take in hand to plead for one, that has defiled himself with sin before a just and righteous God; yea, that he should take in hand to plead for such a one against the fallen angels; and that he should also, by his plea, effectually rescue, and bring them off from the crimes and curse whereof they were verily guilty, by the verdict of the law, and approbation of the Judge.

This, I say, is a great mystery, and deserves to be pried into by all the godly, both because much of the wisdom of heaven is discovered in it, and because the best saint is, or may be concerned with it. Nor must we by any means let this truth be lost; because it is the truth; the text has declared it so; and to say otherwise is to belie the word of God, to thwart the apostle, to sooth up hypocrites, to rob Christians of their privilege, and to take the glory from the head of Jesus Christ. Luke xviii. 11, 12.

The best saints are most sensible of their sins, and most apt to make mountains of their molehills. Satan also, as has been already hinted, doth labor greatly to prevail with them to sin, and to provoke their God against them by pleading

what is true, or by surmising evilly of them to the end they may be accused by him. Job. ii. 9. Great is his malice towards them, great is his diligence in seeking their destruction; wherefore greatly doth he desire to sift, to try, and winnow them, if perhaps he can work in their flesh to answer his design, that is, to break out in sinful acts, that he may have by law to accuse them to their God and Father. Wherefore for their sakes this text abides, that they may see, that when they have sinned they "have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

CHAPTER III.

HOW THIS OFFICE IS MANAGED.

And thus I have showed you the nature, the matter, the order, and occasion of this office of our blessed Lord Jesus.

II. I come now to show you how Jesus Christ doth MANAGE this office of an Advocate for us. And that I may do this to your edification, I shall choose this method for the opening of it. First, Show you how he manages this office with his Father. Second, I shall show you how he manages it before him against our Adversary.

First, How he manages this his office of Advocate WITH HIS FATHER.

1. *He doth it by himself;* by no other as deputy under him. No angel, no saint, no work has place here, but Jesus, and Jesus only. This the text implies: "We have an Advocate," speaking of one, but one, one alone, without an equal or an inferior. We have but one, and he is Jesus Christ.

Nor is it for Christ's honor, nor for the honor of the law, or of the justice of God, that any but Jesus Christ should be an Advocate for a sinning saint. Besides to assert the contrary, what doth it but lessen sin, and make the advocateship of Jesus Christ superfluous? It would lessen sin should it be removed by a saint or an angel; it would make the advocateship of Jesus Christ superfluous, yea, needless, should it be possible that sin could be removed from us by either saint or angel.

Again, if God should admit of more advocates than one, and yet make mention of never a one but Jesus Christ; or if John should allow another, and yet speak nothing but of

Jesus only; yea, that an Advocate under that title should be mentioned but once, but once only in all the book of God, and yet that divers should be admitted, stands neither with the wisdom nor love of God, nor with the faithfulness of the apostle. But saints have but one Advocate, if they will use him, to improve their faith in that office for their help, so; if not they must take what follows.

This I thought good to hint at, because the times are corrupt, and because ignorance and superstition always wait for a countenance with us; and things have a natural tendency to darken all truth, especially this, which bringeth to Jesus Christ so much glory, and yieldeth to the godly so much help and relief.

2. As Jesus Christ alone is Advocate, so *God's bar, and that alone, is that before which he pleads*; for God is Judge himself. Deut. xxxii. 36; Heb. xii. 23. Nor can the cause which now he is to plead be removed into any other court, either by appeals or otherwise.

Could Satan remove us from heaven to another court he would certainly be too hard for us, because there we should want our Jesus, our Advocate, to plead our cause. Indeed sometimes he impleads us before men, and they are glad of the occasion, for they and he are often one: but then we have leave to remove our cause, and to pray for a trial in the highest court, saying, "Let my sentence come forth from thy presence, and let thine eyes behold the things that are equal." Psalm xviii. 2. This wicked world doth sentence us for our good deeds, but how then would they sentence us for our bad ones? But we will never appeal from heaven to earth for right; for here we have no Advocate. Our Advocate is with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

3. As he pleadeth by himself alone, and no where else but in the court of heaven with the Father, so as he pleadeth with the Father for us, *he observeth this rule.* He granteth and confesseth whatever can rightly be charged upon us, yet

so as that *he taketh the whole charge upon himself*, acknowledging the crimes to be his own. "O God (says he) thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee." Psalm lxix. 5. And this he must do, or else he can do nothing. If he hides the sin, or lesseneth it, he is faulty; if he leaves it still upon us, we die. He must then take our iniquity to himself, make it his own, and so deliver us; for having thus taken the sin upon himself, as lawfully he may, and lovingly he doth, ("for we are members of his body," so it is his hand, it is his foot, it is his ear that hath sinned,) it followeth that we live if he lives; and who can desire more? This then must be thoroughly considered, if ever we will have comfort in a day of trouble and distress for sin.

And thus far there is, in some kind, a harmony betwixt his being a sacrifice, a Priest, and an Advocate; as a sacrifice, our sins were laid upon him, (Isa. liii.;) as a Priest, he beareth them, (Exod. xxviii. 38;) and as an Advocate, he acknowledges them to be his own. (Psalm lxix. 5.) Now, having acknowledged them to be his own, the quarrel is no more betwixt us and Satan; for the Lord Jesus has espoused our quarrel, and made it his. All then that we in this matter have to do is, to stand at the bar by faith, among the angels, and see how the business goes. O blessed God! what a lover of mankind art thou, and how gracious is our Lord Jesus, in thus managing matters for us!

The Lord Jesus having thus taken our sins upon himself, next *pleads his own goodness to God in our behalf*, saying, "Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face." Psalm lxix. 6, 7. Mark, 'let them not be ashamed for my sake, let them not to be confounded for my sake.' Shame and confusion are the fruits of guilt, or of a charge for sin,

(Jer. iii. 25,) and are but an entrance into condemnation. Dan. xii. 2; John v. 29. But behold how Christ pleads, saying, Let not that be, for my sake, for the perfection of my righteousness, for the prevalency of my intercession, "let them not be ashamed for my sake, O Lord of hosts." And let no man object, because this text is in the Psalms, as if it were not spoke by the prophet of Christ: for both John and Paul, yea, and Christ himself, do make this Psalm a prophecy of him. Compare verse 9, with John ii. 17, and with Rom. xv. 3; and verse 21, with Matt. xxvii. 48.

But is not this a wonderful thing, that Christ should first take our sins, and account them his own, and then plead the value and worth of his whole self for our deliverance? For by these words "for my sake," he pleads his own self, his own self and all that he has. And that he puts us in good estate again, though our cause was very bad.

To bring this down to weak capacities: Suppose a man should be indebted twenty thousand pounds, but has not twenty thousand farthings to pay it with; and suppose also that this man be arrested for this debt, and that the law also by which he is sued will not admit of a penny bate; this man may yet come well enough off, if his advocate or attorney will make the debt his own, and will in the presence of the judges, out with his bags, and pay down every farthing. Why, this is the way of our Advocate. Our sins are called debts, (Matt. vi. 12;) we are sued for them at the law, (Luke xii. 58, 59;) and the devil is our accuser; but behold, the Lord Jesus comes out with his worthiness, pleads it at the bar, making the debt his own, (Heb. vii. 25, 27; 2 Cor. iii. 5,) and saith, now, "Let them not be ashamed for my sake, O Lord God of hosts; let them not be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel." And hence, as he is said to be an Advocate, so he is said to be a propitiation, or amends-maker, or one that appeaseth the justice of God for our sins. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate

with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"—"and he is the propitiation for our sins."

And who can now object against the deliverance of the child of God? God cannot. For Christ's sake, according as he pleaded, he hath forgiven us all trespasses. Col. ii. 13; Eph. iv. 32. The devil cannot. His mouth is stopped, as is plain in the case of Joshua. Zech. iii. The law cannot. For that approveth of what Christ has done. This then is the way of Christ's pleading.

You must know, that when Christ pleads with God, he pleads with a just and righteous God. Therefore he must plead law, and nothing but law; and this he pleads in both these pleas. First, in confessing the sin, he justifies the sentence of the law, in pronouncing it evil; and then in his laying of himself, his whole self, before God for that sin, he vindicates the sanction and perfection of the law. Thus therefore he magnifies the law and makes it honorable, and yet brings off his client safe and sound, in the view of all the angels of God.

The Lord Jesus having thus taken our sins upon himself, and presented God with all the worthiness that is in his whole self for them, in the next place calleth for justice, or a just verdict upon the satisfaction he hath made to God and to his law. Then proclamation is made in open court, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him, (from him that hath offended,) and clothe him in change of raiment." Zech. iii. Thus the soul is preserved that hath sinned; thus the God of heaven is content that he should be saved; thus Satan is put to confusion, and Jesus applauded and cried up by the angels of heaven and by the saints on earth.

Thus have I showed you how Christ doth advocate it with God and his Father, for us; and I have been the more particular in this, because the glory of Christ, and the comfort of the dejected, are greatly concerned and wrapt up in it. Look then to Jesus, if thou hast sinned; to Jesus as an

Advocate pleading with the Father for thee. Look to nothing else, for he can tell how, and that by himself, to deliver thee. Yea, and he will do it in a way of justice, which is a wonder; and to the shame of Satan, which will be his glory; and also to thy complete deliverance, which will be thy comfort and salvation.

Secondly. But to pass this, and come to the second thing, which is, to show you how the Lord Jesus manages this his office of an Advocate before his Father, AGAINST THE ADVERSARY. For he pleadeth with the Father, but pleadeth against the devil; he pleaded with the Father law and justice, but against the adversary he letteth out himself.

I say, as he pleads against the adversary, so he enlarges himself with arguments over and besides these which he pleads with God his Father.

Nor is it meet or needful that our Advocate, when he pleads against Satan, should so submit himself to matter of law, as when he pleadeth with his Father. The saint by sinning owes Satan nothing; no law of his is broken thereby; why then should he plead, for the saving of his people, justifying righteousness to him? Christ, when he died, died not to satisfy Satan, but his Father: not to appease the devil, but to answer the demands of the justice of God: nor did he design when he hanged on the tree, to triumph over his Father, but over Satan. He redeemed us therefore from the curse of the law by his blood, (Gal. iii. 13,) and from the power of Satan by his resurrection. Heb. ii. 14. He delivered us from righteous judgment by price and purchase, but from the rage of hell by fight and conquest.

And as he acted thus diversely in the work of our redemption, even so he also doth in the execution of his Advocate's office. When he pleads with God, he pleads so; and when he pleads against Satan he pleads so; and how he pleads with God when he deals with law and justice, I have showed you.

And now I will show you how he pleads before him against the Accuser of the brethren.

1. He pleads against him *the well pleasedness that his Father has in his merits;* saying, "This shall please the Lord," or, this doth or will please the Lord, better than any thing that can be propounded. Psalm lxix. 31. Now this plea being true, as it is, (being established upon the liking of God Almighty,) whatever Satan can say to obtain our everlasting destruction, is without ground, and so unreasonable. "I am well pleased," saith God, Matt. iii. 17; and again, "The Lord is well pleased for his [Christ's] righteousness sake." Isa. xlii. 21. All that enter actions against others, pretend that wrong is done either against themselves, or against the king. Now, Satan will never enter an action against us in the court above, for that wrong which by us has been done to himself; he must pretend then, that he sues us, for that wrong which by us has been done to our King. But behold, "We have an Advocate with the Father," and he has made compensation for our offences. He gave himself for our offences. But still Satan maintains his suit; and though our God saith he is well pleased with us for this compensation's sake, yet he will not leave off his clamor. 'Come then,' says the Lord Jesus, 'the contention is not now against my people, but myself, and about the sufficiency of the amends that I have made for the transgressions of my people. But he is near that justifieth me, that approveth and accepteth of my doings, therefore shall I not be confounded Who is mine adversary? let him come near me. Behold the Lord God will help me. Who is he that condemneth me? Lo they all shall (were there ten thousand times as many more of them) wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up.' Isa. l. 8, 9.

Wherefore if the Father say Amen to all this, as I have showed already that he hath and doth; which also further appeareth, because the Lord God has called him the

Saviour, the Deliverer, and the Amen; what follows but that a rebuke should proceed from the throne against him? And this indeed our Advocate calls for, from the hand of his Father, saying, 'O enemy, the Lord rebuke thee!' Yea, he doubles this request to the Judge, to intimate his earnestness for such a conclusion, or to show that the enemy shall surely have it, both from our Advocate and from him before whom Satan has so grievously accused us. Zech. iii.

For what can be expected to follow from such an issue in law as this, but sound and severe checks from the Judge upon him that hath troubled his neighbour, and that hath in the face of the country, cast contempt upon the highest act of mercy, justice, and righteousness, that ever the heathens beheld? And all this is true with reference to the case in hand. Wherefore, "The Lord rebuke thee," is that which, in conclusion, Satan must have for the reward of his works of malice against the children, and for his contemning the works of the Son of God.

Now, our Advocate having thus established (by the law of heaven) his plea with God for us against our Accuser there is a way made for him to proceed, upon a foundation that cannot be shaken. Wherefore he proceeds in his plea, and further urges against this Accuser of his brethren,

2. *God's interest in his people*, and prayeth that God would remember that; "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." True, the church, the saints, are despicable in the world; wherefore men do think to tread them down. The saints are also weak in grace, but have corruptions that are strong; and, therefore, Satan, the god of this world, doth think to tread them down. But the saints have a God, the living, the eternal God, and therefore, shall not be trodden down; yea, they shall be holden up, for God is able to make them stand. Rom. xiv. 4.

It was Haman's mishap to be engaged against the queen,

and the kindred of the queen; it was that made him so that he could not prosper, that brought him to contempt and the gallows. Had he sought to ruin another people, probably he might have brought his design to a desired conclusion; but his compassing the death of the queen spoiled all. Satan also, when he fighteth against the church, must be sure to come to the worst, for God has a concern in that; therefore, it is said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But this hindereth not, but that he is permitted to make almost what spoils he will, of those that belong not to God. Oh, how many doth he accuse, and soon get out from God, against them, a license to destroy them! as he served Ahab and many more. But this, I say, is a very great block in his way, when he meddles with the children. God has an interest in them; "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid." Rom. xi. 1. The text intimates, that they, for sin, had deserved it, and that Satan would fain have had it been so; but God's interest in them preserved them. "God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew." Wherefore, when Satan accuses them before God, Christ (as he pleadeth his own worth and merit) pleadeth also against him, that interest that God has in them.

And this (to some) may seem but an indifferent plea. 'For what engagement lieth upon God,' may they say, 'to be so much concerned with them, for they sin against him and often provoke him most bitterly? Besides, in their best state they are altogether vanity and a very thing of naught. What is man (sorry man) that thou art mindful of him, or that shouldst be so?'

I answer, Though their lieth no engagement upon God for any worthiness there is in man, yet there lieth a great deal upon God for the worthiness that is in himself. God has engaged himself with his, having chosen them to be a people to himself; and by this means they are so secured

from all that all can do against them, that the apostle is bold (upon this very account) to challenge all despite to do its worst against them, saying, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Rom. viii. 33. 'Who?' saith Satan, 'Why, that will I.' 'Aye,' saith Paul, 'but who can do it and prevail?' "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" (verse 34;) by which words the apostle clearly declares, that charges against the elect (though they be brought against them) must needs prove ineffectual as to their condemnation, because their Lord God still will justify, for that Christ hath died for them.

Besides, a little to enlarge, the elect are bound to God by a *sevenfold* cord, and a threefold one is not quickly broken. (1.) Election is eternal as God himself; and so without variableness or shadow of change; and hence it is called an eternal purpose, and a purpose of God that must stand. Eph. iii. 11; Rom. ix. 11. (2.) Election is absolute, not conditional, and, therefore, cannot be overthrown by the sin of the man that is wrapped up therein. No works foreseen to be in us was the cause of God's choosing us; no sin in us shall frustrate or make election void. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Rom. ix. 11; and viii. 33. (3.) By the act of election the children are involved, wrapped up, and covered in Christ. He hath chosen us in *him*, not in ourselves, not in our virtues, no, not for, or because of any thing, but of his own will. Eph. i. 4–11. (4.) Election includeth in it a permanent resolution of God to glorify his mercy on the vessels of mercy, thus foreordained unto glory. Rom. ix. 15, 18, 23. (5.) By the act of electing love it is concluded, that all things whatsoever shall work together for the good of them whose call to God is the fruit of this purpose, this eternal purpose of God. Rom. viii. 28–30. (6.) The eternal inheritance is by a covenant of free and unchangeable grace made over to those thus chosen; and to secure them from

the fruits of sin, and from the malice of Satan, it is sealed by this our Advocate's blood, as he is Mediator of this covenant, who also is become surety to God for them, to wit, to see them forthcoming at the great day, and to set them then, safe and sound before his Father's face after the judgment is over. Rom. ix. 24; Heb. ix. 15; vii. 22; xiii. 20; ix. 17–24; John x. 28, 29. (7.) By this choice, purpose, and decree, the elect, the concerned therein, have allotted them by God, and laid up for them in Christ, a sufficiency of grace to bring them through all difficulties to glory; yea, and they, every one of them, after the first act of faith, (the which also they shall certainly attain, because wrapped up in the promise for them,) are to receive the earnest and first-fruits thereof into their souls. 2 Tim. i. 9; Acts xiv. 22; Eph. i. 4, 5, 13, 14.

Now, put all these things together, and then feel if there be not weight in this plea of Christ against the devil: he pleads God's choice and interest in his saints against him; an interest that is secured by the wisdom of heaven, by the grace of heaven, by the power, will, and mercy of God in Christ; an interest in which all the three persons of the Godhead have engaged themselves, by mutual agreement and operation, to make good, when Satan has done all.

I know there are some that object against this doctrine as false; but such perhaps are ignorant of something else as well as this. However they object against the wisdom of God, whose truth it is, and against Christ our Advocate, whose argument, as he is such, it is; yea, they labor (what in them lieth) to wrest that weapon out of his hand, with which he so cudgelleth the enemy, when, as Advocate, he pleadeth so effectually against him for the rescuing of us from the danger of judgment, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee!"

3. As Christ as Advocate pleads against Satan, the inte-

rest that his Father hath in his chosen, so also he pleads against him by no less authority, *his own interest in them.* "Holy Father (saith he) keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." John xvii. 11. Keep them while in the world, from the evil, the soul damning evil of it. These words are directed to the Father, but they are levelled against the accusations of the enemy, and were spoken here to show what Christ will do for his,(against our foe) now he is above. How, I say, he will urge, before his Father, his own interest in us, against Satan, and against all his accusations, when he brings them to the bar of God's tribunal, with design to work our utter ruin. And is there not a great deal in it? As if Christ should say, 'Father, my people have an adversary who will accuse them for their faults before thee; but I will be their Advocate, and as I have bought them of thee, I will plead my right against him.' John x. 28.

Our English proverb is, Interest will not lie; interest will make a man do that which otherwise he would not. How many thousands are there for whom Christ doth not so much as once open his mouth, but leaves them to the accusations of Satan, and to Ahab's judgment; nay, a worse, because there is none to plead their cause? And why doth not he concern himself with them, but because he is not interested in them? "I pray not for the world, but for them thou hast given me, for they are thine. And all mine are thine; and I am glorified in them." John xvii. 9, 10.

Suppose so many cattle in such a pound, and one goes by whose they are not; doth he concern himself? No; he beholds them, and goes his way. But suppose that at his return he should find his own cattle in that pound; would he now carry it unto them as he did unto the others? No, no; he has interest here; they are his that are in the pound. Now he is concerned, now he must know who put them there, and for what cause too they are served as they are; and if he

finds them rightfully there, he will fetch them thence by ransom; but if wrongfully, he will replevy them, and stand a trial at law with him that has thus illegally pounded his cattle.

And thus it is betwixt Jesus Christ and his. He is interested in them; the cattle are his own, his own sheep, (John x. 3, 4,) but pounded by some other, by the law, or by the devil. If pounded by the law, he delivers them by ransom; if pounded by the devil, he will replevy them, stand a trial at law for them, and will be, against their accuser, their advocate himself. Nor can Satan withstand his plea, though he should against them join argument with the law, forasmuch as has been proved before, Christ can and will (by what he has to produce and plead of his own) save his from all trespasses, charges, and accusations. Besides, all men know that a man's proper goods are not therefore forfeited, because they commit many, and them too, great transgressions. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Now the strength of this plea (thus grounded upon Christ's interest in his people) is great, and hath many weighty reasons on its side; as, (1.) He can say, 'They are *mine*, therefore in reason at my disposal, not at the disposal of an adversary.' For while a thing can properly be called mine, no man has therewith to do but myself; nor doth (a man, nor) Christ close his right to what he has, by the weakness of that thing which is his proper right. He therefore, as an Advocate, pleadeth interest, his own interest in his people; and right must take place with the Judge of all the earth. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. (2.) They cost him *dear*, and that which is dear-bought is not easily parted with. 1 Cor. vi. 20. They were bought with his blood. Eph. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. They were given him for his blood, and therefore are "dear children," (Eph. v 1;) for they are his by the highest price; and this price

he as Advocate pleadeth against the enemy of our salvation. Yea, I will add, they are his because he gave his *all* for them. 2 Cor. viii. 9. When a man shall give his all for this or that, then that which he has so purchased is become his all. Now Christ has given his all for us; he made himself poor for us; wherefore we are become his all, his fulness, and so the church is called. Eph. i. 23. Nay, further, Christ likes well enough his purchase, though it hath cost him his all. "The lines (says he) are fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage." Psalm xvi. Now put all these things together, and there is a strong plea in them. Interest, such an interest, will not be easily parted with. But this is not all; for, (3.) As they cost him dear, so he hath made them *near* to himself, near by way of relation. Now that which did not only cost dear, but that by way of relation is made so, that a man will plead heartily for. Said David to Abner, "Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face." 2 Sam. iii. 13, 14. 'Saul's daughter cost me dear; I bought her with the jeopardy of my life; Saul's daughter is near to me, she is my beloved wife.' He pleaded hard for her, because she was dear and near to him.

Now, I say, the same is true in Christ; his people cost him dear, and he hath made them near to him; wherefore, to plead interest in them, is to hold fast by an argument that is strong.

They are *his spouse*, and he hath made them so; they are his love, his dove, his darling, and he counts them so. Now, should a wretch attempt in open court to take a man's wife away from him, how would this cause the man to plead! Yea, and what judge that is just, and knows that the man has this interest in the woman pleaded for, would yield to or give a verdict for the wretch, against the man whose wife the woman is? Thus Christ, in pleading interest, in pleading "Thou gavest them me," pleads by a strong argument, an

argument that the enemy cannot invalidate. True, were Christ to plead this before a Saul, (1 Sam. xxv. 44,) or before Samson's wife's father, the Philistine, (Judges xiv. 20,) perhaps such treacherous judges would give it against all right. But I have told you, the court in which Christ pleads is the highest and the justest, and that from which there can be no appeal; wherefore Christ's cause, and so the cause of the children of God, must be tried before their Father, from whose face to be sure just judgment shall proceed. But,

As they are called his spouse, so they are called *his flesh* and members of his body. 1 Cor. xii. 27. "Now, (said Paul to the church,) ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Eph. v. 30. This relation also makes a man plead hard. Were a man to plead for a limb or member of his own, how would he plead! what arguments would he use! and what sympathy and feeling would his arguments flow from! 'I cannot lose a hand,' 'I cannot lose a foot,' 'I cannot lose a finger.' Why, saints are Christ's members. How strenuously would a man plead the necessariness of his members to him, and the unnaturalness of his adversary in seeking the destruction of his members, and the deformity of his body! Yea, a man would shrug, and cringe, and weep, and entreat, and make demurs, and halts, and delays, to one thousand years, (if possible,) before he would lose his hand, or any other member.

But, I say, how would he plead and advocate it for his members, if judge, law, reason, and equity were all on his side, and if by the adversary there could be nothing urged, but that against which the advocate had long before made provision for the effectual overthrow thereof? And all this is true as to the case that lies before us.

Thus we see what strength there lieth in this second argument that our Advocate bringeth for us against the enemy. They are his flesh and bones, his members; he cannot spare them; he cannot spare this, because, nor that, because, nor

any, because they are his members: As such they are dear to him, as such they are useful to him, as such they are an ornament to him; yea, though in themselves they are feeble, and through infirmities much disabled from doing as they ought. Thus, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But,

4. As Christ, as Advocate, pleads for us against Satan, his Father's interest in us and his own, so he pleadeth against him *that right and property he has in heaven to give it to whom he will.* He has a right to heaven as Priest and King; it is his also by inheritance; and since he will be so good a benefactor, as to bestow this on some, but not for their deserts; and since again he has to that end spilt his blood for, and taken a generation into covenant-relation to him, that it might be bestowed on them: it shall be bestowed on them; and he will plead this if there be need, if his people sin, and if their accuser seeks by their sin, their ruin and destruction: "Father, (saith he,) I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." John xvii. 24. 'Whom thou hast given me:' Christ's will is the will of heaven, the will of God. Shall not Christ then prevail?

'I will' saith Christ; 'I will' saith Satan; but whose will shall stand? It is true Christ in the text speaks more like an arbitrator than an advocate, more like a judge than one pleading at the bar. 'I will have it so; I judge that so it ought to be, and must.' But there is also something of plea in the words both before his Father and against our enemy; and therefore he speaketh like one that can plead and determine also, yea, like one that has power so to do. But shall the will of heaven stoop to the will of hell? or the will of Christ to the will of Satan? or the will of righteousness to the will of sin? Shall Satan, who is God's enemy, and whose charge wherewith he chargeth us for sin, and which is grounded not upon love to righteousness, but

upon malice against God's designs of mercy against the blood of Christ, and the salvation of his people; I say shall this enemy and this charge prevail with God against the well grounded plea of Christ, and against the salvation of God's elect, and so keep us out of heaven? No, no; Christ will have it otherwise. He is the great donor, and his eye is good. True, Satan was turned out of heaven because he sinned there, and we must be taken into heaven, though we have sinned here. This is the will of Christ, and as Advocate he pleads it against the face and accusation of our adversary. Thus, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But,

5. As Christ, our Advocate, pleadeth for us, against Satan, his Father's interest in us and his own, and pleadeth also what right he has to dispose of the kingdom of heaven; so he pleadeth *against his enemy, that malice and enmity that is in him*, and upon which chiefly his charge against us is grounded, to the confusion of his face. This is evident from the title that our Advocate bestows upon him while he pleads for us against him, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan," O ENEMY; and this name given him signifies so much. And lawyers in their pleas can make a great matter of such a circumstance as this, saying, 'My lord, we can prove that what is now pleaded against the prisoner at the bar is of mere malice and hatred, that has also a long time lain burning and raging in his enemy's breast against him.' This, I say, will greatly weaken the plea and accusation of an enemy. But, says Jesus Christ, 'Father, here is a plea brought in against my Joshua, that clothes him with filthy garments; but it is brought in against him by an enemy, by one that hates goodness worse than he, and that loveth wickedness more than the man against whom at this time he has brought such a heinous charge.' Then leaving with the Father the value of his blood for the accused, he turneth him to the Accuser and pleads against him as an enemy. 'O Satan,

thou that accusest my spouse, my love, my members, thou art an enemy. But it will be objected, that the things charged are true; grant it. Yet what law takes notice of the plea of one who doth professedly act as an enemy? For it is not done in love to truth, justice, and righteousness, nor intended for the honor of the King, or the good of the prosecuted, but to gratify malice and rage, and merely to kill and destroy.' There is therefore a deal of force and strength in an advocate's pleading such a circumstance against an accuser, especially when the crimes now charged are those only for which the law, in the due execution of it, has been satisfied before; wherefore now a lawyer has a double and treble ground or matter to plead for his client against his enemy. And this advantage against him has Jesus Christ.

Besides, it is well known that Satan, as to us, is the original cause of those very crimes for which he accuses us at the bar of God's tribunal. Not to say any thing of how he cometh to us, solicits us, tempts us, flatters us, and always (in a manner) lies at us to do those wicked things for which he so hotly pursues us to the bar of judgment. Though it is not meet for us thus to plead, to wit, laying that fault upon Satan, but rather upon ourselves, yet our Advocate will do it, and make work of it too before God. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke xxii. 31, 32. He maketh here mention of Satan's desires, by way of advantage against him; and doubtless so he did in his prayers with God for Peter's preservation. And what he did here while on earth, as a Saviour in general, that he doth now in heaven as a Priest and an Advocate in special.

I will further suppose that which may be supposed, and that which is suitable to our purpose. Suppose, therefore, that a father hath a child whom he loveth, but the child has

not half that wit that some of the family have, (and I am sure that we have less wit than angels,) and suppose also that some bad minded neighbour, by tampering with, tempting, and by unwearied solicitations should prevail with this child to steal something out of his father's house or grounds, and give it unto him: and this he doth to set the father against the child. And suppose again, that it comes to the father's knowledge, that, the child, through the allurements of such a one, has done so and so against his father; will he therefore disinherit this child? Yea, suppose again, that he that did tempt this child to steal should be the first that should come to accuse this child to its father for so doing, would the father take notice of the accusation of such a one? No verily, we that are evil can do better than so; how then should we think that the God of heaven should do such a thing, since also we have a brother that is wise, and that will and can plead the malice of our enemy, that doth to us all these things, against him, for our advantage? I say, this is the sum of this fifth plea of Christ, our Advocate, against Satan. 'O Satan,' says he, 'thou art an enemy to my people; thou pleadest not out of love to righteousness, nor to reform, but to destroy my beloved and inheritance. The charge wherewith thou chargest my people is thine own, not only as to a matter of charge, but the very things that thou accusest them of are thine, thine in the nature of them. Also, thou hast tempted, allured, flattered, and daily labored with them to do that, for which now thou so willingly would have them destroyed. Yea, all this hast thou done of envy to my Father, and to godliness; of hatred to me and my people; and that thou mightest destroy others besides.' 1 Chron. xxi. 1. And now, what can this accuser say? Can he excuse himself? Can he contradict our Advocate? He cannot. He knows that he is a Satan, an enemy, and as an adversary has he sown his tares among the wheat, that it might be rooted up. But he shall not have his end; his

malice has prevented him, and so have the care and grace of our Advocate. The tares therefore he shall have returned unto him again: but the wheat, for all this, shall be gathered into God's barn. Matt. xiii. 25–30.

Thus, therefore, our Advocate makes use, in his plea against Satan, of the rage and malice that is the occasion of the enemy's charge, wherewith he accuseth the children of God. Wherefore, when thou readest those words, "O Satan," say with thyself, 'Thus Christ our Advocate accuseth our adversary of malice and envy against God and goodness, while he accuseth us of the sins which we commit, for which we are sorry, and Christ has paid a price of redemption.' "And (thus) if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But,

6. Christ, when he pleads as an Advocate for his people, in the presence of God, against Satan, can plead *those very weaknesses of his people*, for which Satan would have them damned, for their relief and advantage. "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" This is part of the plea of our Advocate against Satan, for his servant Joshua, when he said, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan." Zech. iii. 2. Now to be a brand plucked out of the fire, is to be a saint, impotent, weakened, defiled, and made imperfect by sin; for so also the apostle means, when he saith, "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Jude 23. By fire, in both these places, we are to understand sin, for that burns and consumes as fire. Wherefore a man is said to burn, when his lusts are strong upon him; and to burn in lust to others, when his wicked heart runs wickedly after them. 1 Cor. vii. 9; Rom. i. 27.

Also when Abraham said, "I am but dust and ashes," (Gen. xviii. 27,) he means, he was but what sin had left; yea, he had something of the smut and besmearings of sin yet upon him. Wherefore it was a custom with Israel in

the days of old when they set days apart for confession of sin and humiliation for the same, to sprinkle themselves with, or to wallow in dust and ashes, (Esth. iv. 1. 3; Jer. vi. 26; Job xxx. 19; and xlii. 6,) as a token that they did confess they were but what sin had left, and that they were defiled, weakened, and polluted by it.

This then is the next plea of our goodly Advocate for us, "O Satan, this is a brand plucked out of the fire." As if he should say, 'Thou objectest against my servant Joshua that he is black like a coal, or that the fire of sin, at times is still burning in him. And what then? The reason why he is not totally extinct as tow, is not thy pity, but my Father's mercy to him. I have plucked him out of the fire, yet not so out, but that the smell thereof is yet upon him; and my Father and I, consider his weakness, and pity him. For since he is as a brand pulled out, can it be expected by my Father or me, that he should appear before us as clear, and do our biddings as well, as if he had never been there?' Thus as Mephibosheth pleadeth for his excuse his lameness, (2 Sam. ix. 3,) so Christ pleads the infirm and indigent condition of his people against Satan, for their advantage.

Wherefore Christ, by such pleas as these for his people, doth yet further show the malice of Satan, (for all this burning comes through him,) yea, and by it he moveth the heart of God to pity us, and yet to be gentle, and long-suffering, and merciful to us. For pity and compassion are the fruits of the yearning of God's bowels towards us, while he considereth us as infirm and weak, and subject to slips, and stumbles, and falls, because of weakness.

And that Christ our Advocate, by thus pleading, doth turn things to our advantage, consider, (1.) That God is careful that through our weakness our spirits do not fail before him when he chides. Isa. lvii. 16–18. (2.) "He stays his rough wind in the day of his east wind." Isa. xxvii. 7–9, and debates about the measure of affliction, when for

sin we should be chastened, lest we should sink thereunder. (3.) He will not strictly mark what is done amiss, because if he should, we cannot stand. Ps. cxxx. 3, 4. (4.) When he threateneth to strike, his bowels are troubled and his repentings are kindled together. Hos. xi. 8, 9. (5.) He will spin out his patience to the utmost length, because he knows we are such bunglers at doing. Jer. ix. 24. (6.) He will count our little a very great deal, for that he knows we are so unable to do any thing at all. Job i. 21. (7.) He will excuse the souls of his people, and lay the fault upon their flesh, (which has greatest affinity with Satan,) if through weakness and infirmity we do not do as we should. Matt. xxvi. 41.

Now, as I said, all these things happen unto us, both infirmities and pity, because we were once in the fire, and for that the weakness of sin abides upon us to this day. But none of this favor could come to us, nor could we, by any means, cause those infirmities to work for us thus advantageously, but that Christ our Advocate stands our friend, and pleads for us.

But again, before I pass this over, I will, for the clearing of this, present you with a few more considerations, which are of another rank, namely, that Christ our Advocate, as such, makes mention of our weakness so against Satan and before his Father, as to turn all to our advantage. (1.) We are, therefore, to be saved by grace, because by reason of sin we are disabled from keeping of the law. Deut. ix. 5. (2.) We have given unto us the Spirit of grace to help, because we can do nothing that is good without it. Eph. ii. 5; Rom. viii. 26; Ezek. xvi. 8. (3.) God has put Christ's righteousness upon us to cover our nakedness with, because we have none of our own to do it withal. Phil. iii. 7, 8. (4.) God alloweth us to ride in the bosom of Christ to the grave, and from thence in the bosom of angels to heaven, because our own legs are not able to carry us thither. Isa.

xl. 11; Luke xvi. 22. (5.) God has made his Son our Head, our Priest, our Advocate, our Saviour, our Captain, that we may be delivered from all the infirmities and all the fiends that attend us, and that plot to do us hurt. Eph. i. 22; Col. i. 18; Heb. vii. 12. (6.) God has put the fallen angels into chains, (2 Peter; i. 4; Rev. xx. 1, 2,) that they might not follow us too fast; and has enlarged us, and directed our feet in the way of his steps, that we may haste us to the strong tower and city of refuge for succor and safety, and has given good angels a charge to look to us. Ps. xxxiv. 7; Heb. i. 14. (7.) God has promised, that we at our accounting days shall be spared, as a man spareth his own son that serves him. Mal. iii. 17.

Now, from all these things it appears that we have indulgence at God's hand; and that our weaknesses, as our Christ manages the matter for us, are so far off from laying a block or bar in the way to the enjoyment of favor, that they also work for our good. Yea, and God's foresight of them has so kindled his bowels and compassion to us, as to put him upon devising such things for our relief, as by no means could have been, had not sin been with us in the world, and had not the best of the saints been "as a brand plucked out of the burning."

I have seen men (and yet they are worse than God) take most care of, and also best provide for those of their children that have been most infirm and helpless. And our Advocate "shall gather his lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom." Yea, and I know that there is such an art in showing and making mention of weaknesses, as shall make the tears stand in a parent's eyes, and as shall make him search too to the bottom of his purse to find out what may do his weakling good. Christ also has that excellent art, as he is an Advocate with the Father for us; he can so make mention of us and our infirmities, while he pleads before God, against the devil, for us, that he can make the bowels of the

Almighty yearn towards us, and to wrap us up in their compassions.

You read much of the pity, compassion, and of the yearning of the bowels of the mighty God towards his people; all which, I think, are kindled and made to burn towards us, by the pleading of our Advocate.

I have seen fathers offended with their children; but when a brother has turned a skilful advocate, the anger has been appeased, and the means have been concealed. We read but little of this Advocate's office of Jesus Christ, yet much of the fruit of it is extended to the churches. But as the cause of smiles, after offences committed, is made manifest afterwards; so at the day when God will open all things, we shall see how many times our Lord, as an Advocate, pleaded for us, and redeemed us, by his so pleading, into the enjoyment of smiles and embraces, who for sin, but a while before, were under frowns and chastisements.

And thus much for the making out how Christ doth manage his office of an Advocate for us with the Father. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

CHAPTER IV.

FOR WHOM THIS OFFICE IS EXERCISED.

I SHALL come now to the third head, namely, to show you more particularly who they are that have Jesus Christ for their Advocate.

In my handling of this head, I shall show,

1. That this office of an Advocate differeth from that of a Priest, and how.

2. I shall show you how far Christ extendeth this his office of advocateship; I mean in matters concerning the people of God. And then,

3. I shall come more directly to show who they are that have Christ for their Advocate.

1. For the first of these, That this office of Christ, as an Advocate, differeth from that of a Priest. That he is a Priest, a priest for ever, I heartily acknowledge; but that his priesthood and advocateship should be one and the same, I cannot believe.

Because, first, they differ in *name.* We may as well say a father (as such) is a son, or that father and son is the self-same relation, as say a priest and an advocate, as to office, are but one and the same thing. They differ in name as much as Priest and Sacrifice do: a priest is one, and a sacrifice is another; and though Christ is Priest and Sacrifice too, yet as a priest he is not a sacrifice, nor as a sacrifice a priest.

As they differ in name, so they differ in *the nature of office.* A priest is to slay a sacrifice; an advocate is to plead a cause; a priest is to offer his sacrifice, to the end that by the merit thereof he may appease; an advocate is to plead, to plead according to law; a priest is to make intercession by virtue of

his sacrifice; an advocate is to plead law, because amends are made.

As they differ in name and nature, so they also differ as to *their extent.* The priesthood of Christ extendeth itself to the whole of God's elect, whether called, or in their sins; but Christ, as Advocate, pleadeth only for the children.

As they differ in name, nature, and extent, so they differ as to *the persons* with whom they have to do. We read not any where that Christ, as Priest, has to do with the devil as an antagonist; but as an Advocate, he hath.

As they differ in these, so they differ as to *the matters* about which they are employed. Christ, as Priest, concerns himself with every wrong thought, and also with the least imperfection or infirmity, that attends our most holy things; but Christ, as Advocate, doth not so, as I have already showed.

So that Christ as Priest goes before, and Christ as Advocate comes after. Christ as Priest continually intercedes; Christ as Advocate, in case of great transgressions, pleads. Christ as Priest, has need to act always; but Christ as Advocate, sometimes only. Christ as Priest acts in times of peace; but Christ as Advocate, in times of broils, turmoils, and sharp contentions. Wherefore Christ as Advocate, is, as I may call him, a reserve; and his time is then to arise, to stand up and plead, when his, are clothed with some filthy sin that of late they have fallen into, as David, Joshua, or Peter. When some such thing is committed by them, as ministereth to the enemy a show of ground to question the truth of their graces; or when it is a question, and to be debated, whether it can stand with the laws of heaven, with the merits of Christ, and the honor of God, that such a one should be saved—now let an Advocate come forth, now let him have time to plead, for this is a fit occasion for the saints' Advocate to stand up to plead for the salvation of his people. But,

2. I come next to show you how far this office of an Advo-

cate is extended. I hinted at this before, so now I shall be the more brief.

By this office he offers no sacrifice; he only as to matter of justice pleads the sacrifice offered.

By this office he obtains the conversion of none; he only thereby secureth the converted from the damnation which their adversary, for sins after light and profession, endeavoreth to bring them to.

By this office he prevents not temporal punishment; but by it he preserves the soul from hell.

By this office he brings in no justifying righteousness for us; he only thereby prevails to have the disposal of that brought in by himself as Priest, for the justifying of those by a new and fresh act, who had made their justification doubtful by new falls into sin. And this is plain in the history of our Joshua, (Zech. iii.) so often mentioned before.

As Priest he hath obtained eternal redemption for us; and as Advocate, he, by law, maintains our right thereto against the devil and his angels.

3. I come now to show you who they are, that have Jesus Christ for their Advocate. And this I shall do, first, more generally, and then shall be more particular and distinct about it.

First. More generally. They are all the truly gracious—those that are the children of God by adoption. And this the text affirmeth. "I write unto you, little children, that you sin not; and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." They are then the children by adoption that are the persons concerned in the advocateship of Jesus Christ. The priesthood of Christ extendeth itself to the whole body of the elect, but the advocateship of Christ doth not so. This is further cleared by this apostle, and that in this very text, if you consider what immediately follows: "We have an Advocate," (says he) and he is also "the propitiation for our sins." He is our

Advocate and also our Priest. As an Advocate, ours only; but as a propitiation, not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world: to be sure for the elect throughout the world; and they that will extend it further, let them.

And I say again, had he not intended that there should have been a straiter limit put to the advocateship of Christ than he would have us put to his priestly office, what needeth he, when he speaketh of the propitiation which relates to Christ as Priest, have added, "and not for ours only." As an Advocate then he engageth for us that are children; and as a Priest too he hath appeased God's wrath for our sins: but as an Advocate, his offices are confined to the children only; as a Priest he is not so. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only. The sense therefore of the apostle must, I think be this: That Christ, as a Priest, hath offered a propitiatory sacrifice for all; but as an Advocate, he pleadeth only for the children; we have an Advocate to ourselves, and he is also our Priest; but as a Priest he is not ours only, but maketh, as such, amends for all that shall be saved. The elect therefore have the Lord Jesus for their Advocate then, when they are by calling put among the children, because as Advocate he is entirely the children's: "My little children—we have an Advocate."

Objection. 1. 'But he also saith; "If any man sin, we have an Advocate." Any man that sinneth seems by the text, notwithstanding what you say, to have an Advocate with the Father.'

Answer. By "any man," must not be meant any of the world, nor any of the elect, but any man in faith and grace: for he still limits this term "any man," with this restriction "we;" children, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate." We; any man of us. And this is yet further made appear, since he saith, that it is to them he writes, not only here, but further in this chapter: "I write unto you little chil-

dren—I write unto you fathers—I write unto you young men," verses 12–14. These are the persons intended in the text. For under these three heads, are comprehended all men; for they are either children, and so men in *nature;* or young men, and so men in *strength*; or else they are fathers, and so aged and of *experience.* Add to this, that by "any man" the apostle intended not to enlarge himself beyond the persons that are in grace, but to supply what was wanting by the term "little children;" for since the strongest saint may have need of an Advocate, as well as the most feeble of the flock, why should the apostle leave it to be understood, as if the children, and they only, had an interest in that office? Wherefore, after he had said, "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not;" he then adds with enlargement, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." Yet the little children may well be mentioned first, since they most want the knowledge of it, are most feeble, and so by sin may be forced most frequently to act faith on Christ as Advocate. Besides, they are most ready, through temptation, to question whether they have so good a right to Christ and all his offices, as have better and more well grown saints; therefore they, in this the apostle's salutation, are first set down. "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an Advocate," &c. So then the children of God are they who have the Lord Jesus an Advocate for them with the Father.

Since then the children of God have Christ for their Advocate, Art thou a child? Art thou "begotten of God by his word?" James i. 18. Hast thou in thee "the Spirit of adoption?" Gal. iv. 6. Canst thou in faith say, Father, Father, to God? Then is Christ thy Advocate, "now to appear in the presence of God for thee." Heb. ix. 24. To appear there, and to plead there, in the face of the court of heaven, for thee; to plead there against thine adversary

whose accusations are dreadful, whose subtilty is great, whose malice is inconceivable, and whose rage is intolerable; to plead there before a just God, a righteous God, before whose face thou wouldst die, if thou wast to show thyself at his bar, to plead thine own cause.

But, there is a difference in children, some are bigger than some; there are children, and little children. "My little children, I write unto you." 'Little children;' some of the little children can neither say, 'Father,' nor so much as know that they themselves are children.

This is true in nature, and so it is in grace. Wherefore, notwithstanding what was said under the first head, it doth not follow, that if I be a child I must certainly know it, and also am able to call God, Father. Let the first then serve to poise and balance the confident ones, and let this be for the relief of those more feeble; for they that are children, whether they know it or no, have Jesus Christ for their Advocate, for Christ is assigned to be our Advocate by the Judge, by the King, by our God and Father, though we have not known it. True, at present there can come from hence to them that are thus concerned in the advocateship of Christ, but little comfort; but yet it yields them great security. They have "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." God knows this; the devil feels this; and the children shall have the comfort of it afterwards. I say, the time is coming when they shall know, that even then, when they knew it not, they had an Advocate with the Father; an Advocate who was neither loath, afraid, nor ashamed, to plead for their defence against the proudest foe.

And will not this, when they know it, yield them comfort; doubtless it will, yea more, and of a better kind than that which flows from the knowledge that one is born to crowns and kingdoms.

Again: As he is an Advocate for the children, so he is also, as was before hinted, for the strong and experienced;

for no strength in this world secureth from the rage of hell, nor can any experience, while we are here, fortify us against his assaults. There is also an incidency in the best to sin; and the bigger man, the bigger the fall; for the more hurt, the greater damage. Wherefore it is of absolute necessity that an advocate be provided for the strong as for the weak. "Any man;" he that is most holy, most reformed, most refined, and most purified, may as soon be in the dirt as the weakest christian; and so far as I can see, Satan's design is against them most. I am sure the greatest sins have been committed by the biggest saints; for this wayfaring man came to David's house; and when he stood up against Israel, he provoked David to number the people. 2 Sam. xii. 4, 7; 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Wherefore they have as much need of an Advocate as the youngest and feeblest of the flock. What a mind had he to try a fall with Peter? And how quickly did he break the neck of Judas? The like, without doubt, he had done to Peter, had not Jesus, by stepping in, prevented. As long as sin is in our flesh, there is danger. Indeed he saith of the young men, that they are strong, and that they have overcome the wicked one; but he does not say they have killed him. As long as the devil is alive, there is danger: and though a strong christian may be too hard for, and may overcome him in one thing, he may be too hard for, yea, and may overcome him two for one afterwards. Thus he served David, and thus he served Peter, and thus he in our day has served many more. The strongest are weak, the wisest are fools, when suffered to be sifted as wheat in Satan's sieve; yea, and have often been so proved, to the wounding of their great hearts, and the dishonor of religion.

To conclude this: God of his mercy hath sufficiently declared him Advocate, for the strongest and most sanctified, as well as for the least, weakest, and most feeble saint. "My little children, I write unto you, that ye sin not; and if any

man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Objection 2. But some may object, That what has been said as to discovering for whom Christ is an Advocate, has been too general, and, therefore, would have me come more to particulars, else they can get no comfort.

Answer. Well, inquiring soul, so I will; and, therefore, hearken to what I say.

1. Wouldst thou know whether Christ is thine Advocate or no? I ask, Hast thou *entertained* him so to be? When men have suits of law depending in any of the king's courts above, they entertain their attorney or advocate to plead their cause; and so he pleads for them. I say, Hast thou entertained Jesus Christ for thy Lawyer, to plead thy cause? "Plead my cause, O Lord," said David. Psalm xxxv. 1. And again, "Lord, plead thou my cause. Psalm xliii. 1. This, therefore, is the first thing that I would propound to thee: Hast thou with David entertained him for thy Lawyer; or with good Hezekiah cried out, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me?" Isa. xxxviii. 14. What sayest thou, soul? Hast thou been with him, and prayed him to plead thy cause, and cried unto him to undertake for thee? This I call entertaining him to be thy Advocate; and I choose to follow the similitude, both because the scriptures seem to smile upon such a way of discourse, and because the question doth naturally lead me to it. Wherefore, I ask again, Hast thou been with him? Hast thou entertained him, or desired him to plead thy cause?

Question. Thou wilt say unto me, 'How should I know that I have done so?'

Answer. I answer, Art thou sensible that thou hast an action commenced against thee in that high court of justice that is above? I say, Art thou sensible of this? For the defendants (and all God's people are defendants) do not use to entertain their lawyers, but from knowledge that an ac-

tion either is, or may be, commenced against them before the God of heaven. If thou sayest yea, then I ask, Who told thee that thou standest accused for transgression before the judgment-seat of God? I say who told thee so? Hath the Holy Ghost, hath the word, or hath thy conscience? For nothing else, as I know of, can bring such tidings to thy soul.

Again, hast thou found a failure in all others that might have been entertained to plead thy cause! Some make their sighs, their tears, their prayers, and their reformations, their advocates; hast thou tried these, and found them wanting?

Hast thou seen thy state to be desperate, if the Lord Jesus doth not undertake to plead thy cause? For Jesus is not entertained, so long as men can make shift without him. But when it comes to this point, 'I perish for ever, notwithstanding the help of all, if the Lord Jesus steps not in;' then 'Lord Jesus, good Lord Jesus, undertake for me!'

Hast thou, therefore, been with Jesus Christ as concerned in thy soul, as heartily concerned about the action that thou perceivest to be commenced against thee?

Question. You will say, 'How should I *know* that?'

Answer 1. I answer, *Hast thou well considered the nature of the crime* wherewith thou standest charged at the bar of God? Hast thou also considered the justice of the Judge? Again I ask, Hast thou considered what truth, as to matter of fact, there is in the things whereof thou standest accused? Also, hast thou considered the cunning, the malice, and diligence of thy adversary, with the greatness of the loss thou art to sustain, shouldst thou with Ahab, in the book of Kings, (1 Kings xxii. 17–23;) or with the hypocrites in Isaiah, (chap. vi. 1–10;) have the verdict of the Lord God go out from the throne against thee? I ask thee these questions, because if thou art not in the know-

ledge of these things to see, or if thou art not deeply concerned about the greatness of the damage that will certainly overtake thee, and that for ever, (shouldst thou be indeed accused before God, and have none to plead thy cause,) thou hast not, nor canst not, let what will come upon thee, have been with Jesus Christ to plead thy cause; and so, let thy case be ever so desperate, thou standest alone, and hast no helper; (Job xxx. 13;) or if thou hast, they not being the advocates of God's appointing, must needs fall with thee, and with thy burden. Wherefore, consider this seriously, and return thy answer to God, who can tell if truth shall be found in thy answers, better by far than any; for it is he that tries the reins and the heart, and, therefore, to him I refer thee. But,

2. Wouldst thou know whether Jesus Christ is thine Advocate? Then I ask again, *Hast thou revealed thy cause unto him?* I say, hast thou revealed thy cause unto him? For he that goes to law for his right, must not only go to a lawyer, and say, 'Sir, I am in trouble, and am to have a trial at law with mine enemy; pray undertake my cause;' but he must also reveal to his lawyer his cause. He must go to him, and tell him what is the matter, how things stand, where the shoe pinches, and so.

Thus did the church of old, and thus doth every true Christian now; for though nothing can be hid from him, yet he will have things out of thy own mouth; he will have thee to reveal thy matters unto him. Matt. xx. 31. "O Lord of hosts, (said Jeremiah,) that judgest righteously and triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance upon them, for unto thee have I revealed my cause." Jer. xi. 20. And again, "But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them, for unto thee have I opened my cause." Chap. xx. 12. Seest thou here, how saints of old were wont to do; how they not only in a general way intreat Christ to plead their

cause, but in a particular way go to him and reveal or open their cause unto him?

Oh! it is excellent to behold how some sinners will do this when they get Christ and themselves in a closet alone; when they upon their knees are pouring out their souls before him; or, like the woman in the gospel, telling him all the truth. 'O Lord,' saith the soul, 'I come to thee upon an earnest business. I am arrested by Satan; the bailiff was my own conscience; and I am like to be accused before the judgment-seat of God. My salvation lies at stake. I am questioned for my interest in heaven; I am afraid of the Judge; my heart condemns me. 1 John iii. 20. My enemy is subtile, and wants not malice to prosecute me to death, and then to hell. Also, Lord, I am sensible that the law is against me; for, indeed, I have horribly sinned, and thus and thus have I done. Here I lie open to law, and there I lie open to law; here I have given the adversary advantage, and there he will surely have a hank against me. Lord, I am distressed; undertake for me.'

And there are some things that thou must be acquainted with about thine Advocate, before thou wilt venture to go thus far with him. As, 1. Thou must know him to be *a friend*, and not an enemy, to whom thou openest thy heart; and until thou comest to know that Christ is a friend to thee, or to souls in thy condition, thou wilt never reveal thy cause unto him, not thy whole cause. And it is from this that so many that have soul-causes hourly depending before the throne of God, and are in danger every day of eternal damnation, forbear to entertain Jesus Christ for their Advocate, and so wickedly conceal their matters from him. But "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper." Prov. xxviii. 13. This therefore must first be believed by thee, before thou wilt reveal thy cause unto him. 2. A man, when his estate is called in question, (I mean his right and title thereto,) will be very cautious, especially if he also questions his

title to it himself, to whom he reveals that affair. He must know him to be one that is not only friendly, but *faithful*, to whom he reveals such a secret as this. Why, thus it is with Christ and the soul. If the soul is not somewhat persuaded of the faithfulness of Christ, namely, that if he can do him no good he will do him no harm, he will never reveal his cause unto him, but will seek to hide his counsel from the Lord. This therefore is another thing by which thou mayst know thou hast Christ for thy Advocate, if thou hast heartily and in very deed revealed thy cause unto him.

Now, they that do honestly reveal their cause to their lawyer, will endeavor to possess him, as I hinted before, with the worst; they will with words make it as bad as they can; for (think they) 'By that means I shall prepare him for the worst that my enemy can do.' And thus souls deal with Jesus Christ. See Psalms li. and xxxviii. with several others that might be named, and see if God's people have not done so. "I said," saith David, "that I would confess my transgressions against myself, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." But,

3. Hast thou Jesus Christ for thy Advocate? or wouldst thou know if thou hast? Then I ask again, *Hast thou committed thy cause to him?* When a man retains his lawyer to stand for him and plead his cause, he doth not only reveal, but commits his cause to him. "I would seek unto him (says Eliphaz to Job,) and unto him would I commit my cause." Job v. 8. Now there is a difference betwixt revealing my cause and committing it to a man. To reveal my cause, is to open it to one; and to commit it to him, is to trust it in his hand. Many a man will reveal his cause to him unto whom he will yet be afraid to commit it; but he that retains a lawyer to plead his cause, doth not only reveal, but commit his cause unto him. As, suppose the right to his estate was called in question, why then he not only reveals his cause to his lawyer, but puts into his hands his

evidences, deeds, leases, mortgages, bonds, or what else he hath, to show a title to his estate. And thus do Christians deal with Christ. They deliver up all to him, namely, all their evidences, promises, and assurances, which they have thought they had for heaven and the salvation of their souls, and desire him to peruse, to search and try them every one. Psalm cxxxix. 23. "And see if there be any iniquity in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." This is committing thy cause to Christ; and this is the hardest task of all. For the man that doth thus, trusteth Christ with all; and it implieth, that he will live or die, stand or fall, lose or win, according as Christ manages the business. Thus did Paul, (Tim. i. 12,) and thus Peter admonishes us to do.

Now he that doth this must be convinced, 1. Of the *ability* of Jesus Christ to defend him. For a man will not commit so great a concern as his all is, to his friend; no; not to his friend, be he ever so faithful, if he perceives not in him ability to save him, and to preserve what he hath against all the cavils of an enemy. And hence it is that the ability of Jesus Christ, as to the saving of his people, is so much insisted on in the scripture; as, "I have laid help on one that is mighty;" (Psalm lxxxix. 19.) "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save," (Isa. lxiii. 1;) and again, "I will send them a Saviour and a great one." Chap. xix. 20. 2. As they must be convinced of his ability to help them, so they must, of his *courage*. A man that has parts sufficient, may yet fail his friend for want of courage. Wherefore the courage and greatness of Christ's spirit, as to the undertaking of the cause of his people, is also amply set out in Scripture; "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; until he hath brought judgment to victory." Isa. xlii. 4; Matt. xii. 20. 3. They must also be convinced of his *willingness* to do this for them. For though one be able, and of courage sufficient, yet if he is not willing to undertake one's

cause, what is it the better? Wherefore he declareth his willingness also, and how ready he is to stand up to plead the cause of the poor, and them that are in want. "The Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them." Prov. xxii. 23.

They must also be convinced of this, that Christ is *tender*, and will not be offended at the dulness of his client. Some men can reveal their cause to their lawyers better than some others, and are more serviceable and handy in that affair than others. But, saith the Christian, 'I am dull and stupid that way; will not Christ be very shy of me because of this?' Honest heart! he hath a supply for thy defects in himself; and knoweth what thou wantest, and where the shoe pinches, though thou art not able distinctly to open matters to him. The child is pricked with a pin, and lies crying in the mother's lap, but cannot show its mother where the pin is. But there is pity enough in the mother to supply this defect of the child. Wherefore she undresses it, opens it, searches every clout from head to foot of the child, and thus finds where the pin is. Thus will thy lawyer do; he will search and find out thy difficulties; and where Satan seeketh an advantage over thee, accordingly will provide his remedy.

Question. 'O but will he not be weary? The prophet complains of some, that they weary God, (Isa. vii. 13;) and mine is a very cross and intricate cause. I have wearied many a good man while I have been telling my tale to him, and I am afraid I shall also weary Jesus Christ.'

Answer. Soul, he suffered and did bear with the manners of Israel forty years in the wilderness, (Acts xiii. 18,) and hast thou tried him half so long? The good souls that have gone before thee have found him a tried stone, a sure one to be depended on as to this. And the prophet saith positively, that he fainteth not, neither is weary; and that there is no searching of his understanding. Isa. xl. 28. Let all

these things prevail with thee to believe, that if thou hast committed thy cause unto him, he will bring it to pass, to a good pass; to so good a pass as will glorify God, honor Christ, save thee, and shame the devil.

4. Wouldst thou know whether Jesus Christ is thine Advocate, whether he has taken in hand to plead thy cause? Then I ask, *Dost thou* (together with what has been mentioned before) *wait upon him according to his counsel, till things shall come to a legal issue?* Thus must clients do. There are a great many turnings and windings about suits and trials at law: the enemy also, with his supersedeas, cavils, and motions, often defers a speedy issue; wherefore the man whose the concern is, must wait. As the prophet said, "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation." But how long, Prophet, wilt thou wait? Why, says he, "until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me." Micah vii. 7–10.

Perhaps, when thy cause is tried, things for the present are upon this issue;—thy adversary indeed is cast, but whether thou shalt have an absolute discharge, as Peter had, or a conditional one, as David, and as the Corinthians had, that is the question. 2 Sam. xii. 10, 11, 14; 1 Cor. xi. 27–32. True, thou shalt be completely saved at last;—but yet, whether is it not best to leave thee a memento of God's displeasure at thy sin, by awarding that the sword shall never depart from thy house; or that some sore sickness or other distresses shall haunt thee as long as thou livest; or perhaps that thou shalt walk without the light of God's countenance for several years and a day. Now, if any of these three things happen to thee, thou must exercise patience, and wait. Thus did David, "I waited patiently;" and again, he exercises his soul in this virtue, saying, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Psa. lxii. 5. For now "we are judged of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." And by this judgment, though

it sets us free from their damnation, yet we are involved in many troubles, and perhaps must wait many a day before we can know that (as to the main) the verdict hath gone on our side. Thus, therefore, in order to thy waiting on him without fainting, it is meet that thou shouldst know the methods of him that manages thy cause for thee in heaven; and suffer not distrust to break in and bear sway in thy soul, "for he will at length bring thee forth to light, and thou shalt behold his righteousness. She also that is thine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her that said unto thee, Where is thy God?"

Objection. 'But what is it to wait upon him according to his counsel?'

Answer. 1. To wait, is *to be of good courage*, to live in expectation, and to look for deliverance, though thou hast sinned against thy God. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Psa. xxvii. 14.

2. To wait upon him, is *to keep his way*, to walk humbly in his appointments. "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land." Psa. xxxvii. 34.

3. To wait upon him, is *to observe and keep those directions which he giveth thee to observe*, even while he stands up to plead thy cause; for without doing this a man may mar his cause in the hand of him that is to plead it. Wherefore keep far from an evil matter, have no correspondence with thy enemy, walk humbly for the wickedness thou hast committed, and loathe and abhor thyself for it in dust and ashes. To these things doth the Scripture every where direct us.

4. To wait, is *to incline to hearken to those further directions thou mayst receive*, from the mouth of thine Advocate, as to any fresh matters that may forward and expedite a good issue of thy affair in the court of heaven. The want of this was the reason that the deliverance of Israel did linger so long. "O (says he) that my people had hearkened to me,

and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned mine hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should soon have submitted themselves; but their time should have endured for ever." Psalm lxxxi. 13–15.

5. Also, *if it tarry long, wait for it.* Do not conclude that thy cause is lost, because at present thou dost not hear from court. Cry if thou wilt, 'O when wilt thou come unto me?' but never let such a wicked thought pass through thy heart, as to say, "This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer." 2 Kings vi. 33.

6. But *take heed that thou turn not thy waiting into sleeping.* Wait thou must, and wait patiently too; but yet wait with much longing and earnestness of spirit, to see or hear how matters go above. You may observe, that when a man that dwells far down in the country, and has some business at the term, in this or another of the king's courts, though he will wait his lawyer's time and convenience, yet he will so wait, as still to inquire at the post-office, or at the carrier's, or if a neighbour comes down from term, at his mouth, for letters, or any other intelligence, that he may know how his cause went, whether he or his adversary had the better. Thus thou must wait upon thy Advocate. His ordinances are his post-office, his ministers his carriers, where tidings from heaven are to be had, and where those that are to be sued in that court by the devil may, at one time or other, hear from their Lawyer or Advocate, how things are likely to go. Wherefore, I say, wait at the posts of Wisdom's house; go to ordinances with expectation to hear from thy Advocate there; for he will send in due time. "Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Hab. ii. 1–3.

And now, soul, I have answered thy request, and let me hear what thou sayst unto me.

Soul. 'Truly,' says the soul, 'by what you have said, me-

thinks I may have this blessed Jesus to be my Advocate; for I think verily I have retained him to be my Advocate; I have also revealed my cause unto him, yea, committed both it and myself unto him; and, as you say, I wait, Oh! I wait! and my eyes fail with looking upward. Fain would I hear how my soul standeth in the sight of God, and whether my sins (which I have committed since light and grace were given unto me) be by my Advocate taken out of the hand of the devil, and by my Advocate removed as far from me as the ends of the earth are asunder; whether the verdict has gone on my side, and what a shout there was among the angels when they saw it went well with me! But alas! I have waited, and that a long time, and have, as you advise, run from ordinance to minister, and from minister to ordinance, or (as your phrase is) from the post to the carrier, and from the carrier to the post-office, to see if I could hear aught from heaven, how matters went about my soul there. I have also asked those that pass by the way, if they saw him whom my soul loveth, and if they had any thing to communicate to me? But nothing can I get or find but generals; as that I have an Advocate there, and that he pleadeth the cause of his people, and that he will thoroughly plead their cause; but what he has done for *me*, of that as yet I am ignorant. I doubt if my soul shall by him be effectually secured; or if it be, I fear that yet a *conditional verdict* will be awarded concerning me, that much bitter will be mixed with my sweet, and that I must drink gall and wormwood for my folly. For if David, Asa, Hezekiah, and such good men, were so served for their sins; why should I look for other dealing at the hand of God! But as to this, I will endeavor to bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, and shall count it an infinite mercy, if this judgment comes to me from him, that I may not be condemned with the world. Isa. xxxix. 3, 8; 1 Cor. xi. 32. I know it is dreadful walking in darkness; but if that also should be the Lord's lot upon

me, I pray God I may have faith enough to stay upon him till death; for then will the clouds blow over, and I shall see him in the light of the living.

'My enemy the devil, as you see, is of an inveigling temper; and though he has accused me before the judgment-seat of God, yet when he comes to me at any time, he glavers and flatters as if he never did mean me harm; but I think it is that he may get further advantage against me. So I carry it now at a greater distance than formerly; and O that I was at the remotest distance, not only from him, but also from that self of mine, that laboreth with him for my undoing!

'But although I say these things now, and to you, yet I have my solitary hours, and in them I have other strange thoughts. For thus I think,—My cause is bad. I have sinned, and have been vile. I am ashamed myself of mine own doings, and have given mine enemy the best end of the staff. The law, and reason, and my conscience, plead for him against me, and all is true he puts into his charge against me, that I have sinned more times than there be hairs on my head. I know not any thing that ever I did in my life, but it had flaw, or wrinkle, or spot, or some such thing in it. Mine eyes have seen vileness in the best of my doings; what then, think you, must God needs see in them? Nor can I do any thing yet, (for all I know that I am accused by my enemy before the judgment-seat of God,) better than what already is imperfect. "I lie down in my shame, and my confusion covers me. I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men!" Jer. iii. 24, 25; Job vii. 20.

Reply. Well, soul, I have heard what thou hast said; and if all be true which thou hast said, it is good, and gives me ground of hope, that Jesus Christ is become thine Advocate; and if that be so, no doubt but thy trial will come to a good conclusion. And be not afraid, before that,

of the holiness of God; for thine Advocate has this for his advantage, that he pleads before a Judge that is just, and against an enemy that is unholy and rejected. Nor let the thoughts of the badness of thy cause terrify thee over much. Cause thou hast indeed to be humble, and thou dost well to cover thy face with shame; and it is no matter how base and vile thou art in thine own eyes, provided it comes not by renewed acts of rebellion, but through a spiritual sight of thy imperfections. Only let me advise thee here to stop. Let not thy shame, nor thy self-abasing apprehension of thyself, drive thee from the firm and permanent ground of hope, which is the promise, and the doctrine of an Advocate with the Father. No; let not the apprehension of the badness of thy cause do it, forasmuch as he did never yet take cause in hand that was good, perfectly good, of itself; and his excellency is, to make a man stand that has a bad cause; yea, he can make a bad cause good, in a way of justice and righteousness!

CHAPTER V.

PRIVILEGES PECULIAR TO SUCH.

IV. And for thy further encouragement in this matter, I will here bring in the fourth chief head, to wit, to show what EXCELLENT PRIVILEGES (I mean over and above what has already been spoken of) they have, that are made partakers of the benefit of this office. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

1. Thy Advocate pleads *to a price paid, to a propitiation made;* and this is a great advantage. Yea, he pleads to a satisfaction made for all the wrongs done, or to be done, by his elect. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Heb. x. 10–14; ix. 26. "By one offering;" that is, by the offering of himself, by one offering once offered, once offered in the end of the world. This, I say, thy Advocate pleads. When Satan brings in fresh accusations for more transgressions against the law of God, he forces not Christ to shift his first play. I say, he puts him not to his shifts at all; for the price once paid has in it sufficient value (would God impute it to that end) to take away the sin of the whole world. There is a man that hath brethren; he is rich and they are poor, (and this is the case betwixt Christ and us;) and the rich brother goeth to his father, and saith, Thou art related to my brethren with me, and out of my store, I pray thee, to let them have sufficient; and for thy satisfaction I will put into thy hand the whole of what I have, which perhaps is worth a hundred thousand pounds by the year: and this other sum I give, that they be not disinherited. Now, will not this last his

poor brethren to live upon a great while? But Christ's worth can never be drawn dry.

Now, set the case again, that some ill-conditioned man should take notice that these poor men live all upon the spend, (and saints do so,) and should come to the good man's house, and complain to him of the spending of his sons, and that while their elder brother stands by. What do you think the elder brother would reply, if he was as good-natured as Christ? Why, he would say, 'I have yet with my father in store for my brethren; wherefore then seekest thou to stop his hand? As he is just, he must give them for their conveniency, yea, and as for their extravagances, I have satisfied for them so well, that however he afflicts them, he will not disinherit them. I hope you will read and hear this, not like them that say, "Let us do evil that good may come," but like those whom the love of Christ constrains to be better. However, this is the children's bread; that which they have need of, and without which they cannot live; and they must have it, though Satan should put pins into it therewith to choke the dogs.

And for the further clearing of this, I will present you with these few considerations. (1.) Those that are most sanctified, have yet a body of sin and death in them. Rom. vii. 24. And so also it will be, while they continue in this world. (2.) This body of sin strives to break out, and will break out, to the polluting of the conversation, (if saints be not the more watchful;) yea, it has broke out in a most sad manner, and that in the strongest saints. Gal. v. 17. (3.) Christ offereth no new sacrifice for the salvation of these his people; for, being raised from the dead, he dies no more. Rom. vi, 9. So then if saints sin, they must be saved (if saved at all) by virtue of the offering already offered: and if so, then all Christ's pleas, as an Advocate, are grounded upon that one offering which before, as a Priest, he presented God with, for taking away sin. So then Chris-

tians live upon this old stock; their transgressions are forgiven for the sake of the worth that yet God finds in the offering that Christ hath offered. And all Christ's pleadings, as an Advocate, are grounded on the sufficiency and worth of that one sacrifice; I mean all his pleadings with his Father, as to the charge which the accuser brings in against them. For though thou art a man of infirmity, and so incident to nothing as to stumble and fall, if grace doth not prevent, (and it preventeth not always;) yet the value and worth of the price that was once paid for thee, is not yet worn out; and Christ, as an Advocate, still pleadeth that, (as occasion is given,) with success, to thy salvation. And this privilege they have, who, indeed, have Christ for their Advocate; and I put it here, in the first place, because all others do depend upon it.

2. Thine Advocate, as he pleadeth a price already paid, so, and therefore, he pleads *for himself as for thee.* We are all concerned in one bottom; if he sink, we sink; if we sink, he sinks.

Give me leave to make out my meaning. Christ pleads the value and virtue of the price of his blood and sacrifice for us. And admit of this horrible supposition a little for argument's sake, That though Christ pleads the worth of what, as Priest, he offereth, yet the soul for whom he so pleads perishes eternally. Now where lieth the fault? 'In sin,' you say. True; but it is because there was more virtue in sin to damn, than there was in the blood pleaded by Christ, to save. For he pleadeth his merit; he put it into the balance against sin; but sin hath weighed down the soul of the sinner to hell, notwithstanding the weight of merit that he did put in against it! Now, what is the result, but that the Advocate goes down, as well as we; we to hell, and he in esteem? Wherefore, I say, he is concerned with us; his credit, his honor, his glory, his renown, flies all away, if those for whom he pleads as an Advocate, perish for want

of worth in his sacrifice pleaded. But shall this ever be said of Christ? or will it be found that any, for whom Christ as Advocate yet pleads, perish for want of worth in the price, or of neglect in the Advocate to plead it? No, no; himself is concerned, and that as to his own reputation and honor, as to the value and virtue of his blood; nor will he lose those, for want of pleading for them, concerned in this office.

I argue again: Christ, as Advocate, must needs be concerned in his plea, for that every one, for whose salvation he advocates is his own; so then *if he lose, he loses his own*, his substance and inheritance. Thus, if he lose the whole, and if he lose a part, one, any one of his own, he loseth part of his all, and of his fulness; wherefore we may well think that Christ, as Advocate, is concerned, even concerned with his people, and therefore will thoroughly plead their cause.

Suppose a man should have a horse, though lame, and a piece of ground, though somewhat barren, yet if any should attempt to take these away, he would not sit still and so lose his own. 'No,' saith he, 'since they are mine own, they shall cost me five times more than they are worth, but I will maintain my right.' I have seen men sometimes strongly engaged in law, for that which, when well considered by itself, one would think was not worth regarding; but when I have asked them, Why so concerned for a thing of so little esteem? they have answered, 'O, it is some of that by which I hold a title of honor, or my right to a greater income, and therefore I will not lose it.' Why, thus is Christ engaged: what he pleads for is his own, his all, his fulness; yea, it is that by which he holds his royalty, for he is "King of saints." Rev. xv. 3; John vi. 37–39; Psalm xvi. 5, 6. It is part of his estate, and that by which he holds some of his titles of honor. Eph. v. 23; Jer. l. 34; Rom. xi. 26; Heb. ii. 10. Saviour, Redeemer, Deliverer, and Captain, are some of his titles of honor; but if he lose any of those

upon whose account he wears those titles of honor, for want of virtue in his plea, or for want of worth in his blood, he loseth his own, and not only so, but part of his royalty, and does also diminish and lay a blot upon his glorious titles of honor. And he is jealous of his honor; his honor he will not give to another.

Wherefore be not afraid. He will not leave nor forsake those who have given themselves unto him, and for whom he is become an Advocate with the Father, to plead their cause; even because thou art one, one of his own, one by whom he holdeth his glorious titles of honor.

Objection. 'O, but I am but one, and a very sorry one too; and what is *one*, especially such a one as I am? Can there be a miss of the loss of such a one?'

Answer. One and one make two, and so *ad infinitum.* Christ cannot lose one, but as he may lose more, and so in conclusion lose all. But of all God has given him, he will lose nothing. John vi. 38, 39. Besides, to lose one, would encourage Satan, disparage his own wisdom, make him incapable of giving in, at the day of account, the whole tale to God of those that he has given him. Further, this would dishearten sinners, and make them afraid of venturing their cause and their soul in his hand; and would, as I said before, either prove his propitiation in some sense ineffectual, or else himself defective in his pleading of it: but none of these things must be supposed. He will thoroughly plead the cause of his people, execute judgment for them, bring them out to the light, and cause them to behold his righteousness. Micah vii.

3. *The plea of Satan is groundless;* and that is another privilege. For albeit thou hast sinned, yet since Christ before has paid thy debt, and also paid for more; since thou hast not yet run beyond the price of thy redemption, it must be concluded, that Satan wants a good bottom to ground his plea upon, and therefore must, in conclusion, fail of his de-

sign. True, there is sin committed, there is a law transgressed; but there is also a satisfaction for this transgression, and that which superabounds; so, though there be sin, yet there wants a foundation for a plea. Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, but Christ had other garments prepared for him, change of raiment; wherefore iniquity, as to the charge of Satan vanishes. And the Angel answered and said, "Take away the filthy garments from him;" (this intimates, that there was no ground, no sufficient ground for Satan's charge;) and to him he said, "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zech. iii. 4. Now, if there be no ground, no sound and sufficient ground, to build a charge against the child of God upon, I mean as to eternal condemnation; for that is the thing contended for; then, as I said, Satan must fall like lightning to the ground, and be cast over the bar, as a corrupt and illegal pleader; but this is so, as in part is proved already, and will be further made out by that which follows.

They that have indeed Christ for their Advocate, are themselves, by virtue of another law than that against which they have sinned, secured from the charge that Satan brings in against them. I granted before, that the child of God has sinned, and that there is a law that condemneth for this sin: but here is the thing, this child is removed by an act of grace into and under another law. "For we are not under the law;" and so consequently, "there is now no condemnation for them." Rom. vi. 14; viii. 1. Wherefore when God speaketh of his dealing with his, he saith, it shall not be by their covenant; (Ezek. xvi. 61;) that is, not by that of the law, they then being not under the law. What if a plea be commenced against them; a plea for sin, and they have committed sin; a plea grounded upon the law, and the law takes cognizance of their sin? Yet, I say, the plea wants a good bottom, for that the person thus accused, is put under another law; hence he says, "Sin shall not have dominion

over you, for you are not under the law." If the child of God, was under the law, Satan's charge would be good, because it would have a substantial ground of support; but since the child is dead to the law, Gal. ii. 19, and that also dead to him, (for both are true as to condemnation, Rom. vii. 5,) how can it be that Satan should have matter of fact, sufficient matter of fact, that is sin? For by his change of relation, he is put out of the reach of that law. There is a woman, a widow, that oweth a sum of money, and she is threatened to be sued for the debt; now what doth she but marry; so when the action is commenced against her as a widow, the law finds her a married woman, what now can be done? Nothing to her; she is not what she was; she is delivered from that state by her marriage; if any thing be done, it must be done to her husband. But if Satan will sue Christ for my debt, he oweth him nothing; and as for what the law can claim of me while I am under it, Christ has delivered me by redemption from that curse, "being made a curse for me." Gal. iii. 13.

Now, the covenant into which I am brought by grace, by which also I am secured from the law, is not a law of sin and death, as that is from under which I am brought, but a law of grace and life; (Rom. viii. 2;) so that Satan cannot come at me by that law and by grace. I am by that secured also from the hand, and mouth, and sting of all other; I mean still as to eternal concern. Wherefore God saith, if we break his law, the law of works, he will visit our sin with a rod, and our iniquity with stripes; but his covenant, his new covenant, will he not break, (Psalm lxxxix. 30–37,) but will keep close to that, and so secure us from eternal condemnation.

Christ is also made the Mediator of that covenant, and therefore an Advocate by that; for his priestly office and advocateship are included in this mediation. Wherefore when Satan pleads by the old, Christ pleads by the new

covenant, for the sake of which the old one is removed. "In that he saith, A new covenant he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 13. So then the ground of plea is with Jesus Christ, and not with our Accuser.

Now, what doth Christ plead, and what is the ground of his plea? Why, he pleads for exemption and freedom from condemnation, though by the law of works his children have deserved it: and the ground of this his plea, as to law, is the matter of the covenant itself, for thus it runs: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. viii. 12. Now here is a foundation, a foundation in law, for our Advocate to build his plea upon; a foundation in a law not to be moved, or removed, or made to give place, as this is forced to do, upon which Satan grounds his plea against us.

Men, when they plead before a judge, use to plead matter of law. Now suppose there is an old law in the realm, by which men deserve to be condemned to death; and there is a new law in this realm, that secureth men from that condemnation which belongs them by the old; and suppose also, that I am completely comprehended by all the provisions of the new law, and not by any tittle thereof, excluded from a share therein; suppose again, that I have a brangling adversary that pursues me by the old law, which yet cannot in right touch me, because I am interested in the new; my Advocate is also one that pleads by the new law, where only there is ground of plea; shall not mine adversary feel the plea to the delivering of me, and the putting of him to shame? Yes, verily, especially since the plea is good, the Judge just, nor can the enemy find any ground for a demur to be put in against my present discharge in open court, and that by proclamation; especially since my Advocate has also, by his blood, fully satisfied the old law, that he might establish the new. Heb. x. 9, 11, 12.

4. Since that which goeth before is true, it follows, that *he that entereth his plea against the children, must needs be overthrown:* for always before just judges it is right that takes place. "Judge the right, O Lord," said David; or, "Let my sentence come forth from thee," according to the law of grace. And he that knows what strong ground or bottom our Advocate has for his pleadings, and how Satan's accusations are without sound foundation, will not be afraid (speaking in Christ) to say, 'I appeal to God Almighty, since Christ is my Advocate by the new law, whether I ought to be condemned to death and hell, for what Satan pleads against me by the old.' Satan urgeth, that we have sinned; but Christ pleads to his propitiatory sacrifice. So Satan pleads the justice and holiness of God against us; and there the accuser is overthrown again; for to them Christ appeals. And his appeal is good; since the law testifies to the sufficiency of the satisfaction that Christ has made thereto by his obedience, (Rom. iii. 22, 23,) and also since, by another covenant, God himself has given us to Jesus Christ, and so delivered us from the old. Wherefore you read nothing as an effect of Satan's pleading against us, but that his mouth is stopped, as appears by Zechariah iii.; and that he is cast, yea, cast down, as you have it in Rev. xii.

Indeed, when God admits not, when Christ wills not to be an Advocate, and when Satan is bid stand at the right hand of one accused, (Psalm cix. 6, 7,) to enforce by pleading against him, the things charged on him by the law, then he can prevail, prevail for ever against such a wretched one. But when Christ stands up to plead, when Christ espouses this or that man's cause, then Satan must retreat, then he must go down. And this necessarily flows from the text, "We have an Advocate," a prevailing one; one that never lost a cause; one that always puts the children's enemy to the rout, before the judgment seat of God. This, therefore is another privilege, that they have, who have Jesus Christ

for their Advocate; their enemy must needs be overthrown, because both law and justice are on their side.

5. *Thine Advocate has pity for thee, and great indignation against thine Accuser:* and these are two excellent things. When a lawyer hath pity for a man whose cause he pleadeth, it will engage him much: but when he has indignation also against this man's accuser, this will yet engage him more. Now, Christ has both these, and that not of humor, but by grace and justice; grace to us, and justice to our accuser. He came down from heaven that he might be a Priest, and returned thither again to be a Priest and Advocate for his; and in both these offices he leveleth his whole force and power against thine Accuser. "For this cause was the Son of God manifest, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

Cunning men will, if they can, retain such a one to be their advocate that has a particular quarrel against their adversary. For thus think they—'He that is such, will not only plead for me, but for himself, and to right his own wrongs: and since it is so my concerns and my advocate's are interwoven, I am like to fare much better for the anger that is conceived in his heart against him.' And this, I say, is the children's case. Their Advocate counts their Accuser his greatest enemy, and waits for a time to take vengeance, and often takes opportunity, when he has aught to do for his people. Hence he says, "The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." Isa. lxiii. 3, 4.

I do not say that this revenge of Christ is, as oft-times is a man's, of spite, prejudice, or other irregular lettings out of passion; but it arises from righteousness and truth. Nor can it be, but that Jesus must have a desire to take vengeance on his enemy and ours, since holiness is in him to the utmost bounds of perfection. And I say again, that in all his pleading as an Advocate, as well as in all his offering as a Priest, he has a hot and flaming desire and design to

right himself upon his foe and ours. Hence he triumphed over *him*, when he died for *us* on the cross; and designed the spoiling of his dominion, while he poured out his blood for us before God. Col. ii. 14, 15. We then have this advantage more, in that Christ is our Advocate—our enemy is also his, and the Lord counts him so.

6. As thine Advocate, so *thy Judge holdeth thine Accuser for his enemy also.* For it is not in love to righteousness and justice that Satan accuseth us to God, but that he may destroy the workmanship of God. Wherefore he also fighteth against God when he accuseth the children; and this thy Father knows right well. He must therefore distinguish between the charge and the mind that brings it, especially when what is charged upon us is under the gracious promise of a pardon, (as I have showed it is.) Shall not the Judge then hear his Son (for our Advocate is his Son) in the cause of one that he favors, and that he justly can, against an enemy who seeks his dishonor, and the destruction of his eternal designs of grace.

A mention of the judge's son goes far with countrymen; and great striving there is with them who have great enemies and bad causes, to get the judge's son to plead, promising themselves, that the judge is as like to hear him, and to yield a verdict to his plea, as to any other lawyer. But what now shall we say concerning our Judge's Son, who takes part not only with his children, but with him, and with law and justice, in pleading against our accuser? Yea, what shall we say when judge, advocate, and law, are all bent to make our persons stand and escape, whatever, and how true soever, the charge and accusation is by which we are assaulted of the devil! And yet all this is true; wherefore here is another privilege of them that have Jesus for their Advocate.

7. Another privilege that they have who have Jesus Christ for their Advocate, is, that *he is undaunted, and of good*

courage, as to the cause that he undertakes. For that is a requisite qualification for a lawyer, to be bold and undaunted in a man's cause. Such a one is coveted, especially by him that knows he has a brazen faced antagonist. Wherefore Christ saith, that he will set his face like a flint, (Isa. l. 5–7,) when he stands up to plead the cause of his people. Lawyers, of all men, need this courage, and to be above other men of hard foreheads, because of the affronts they sometimes meet with, be their cause ever so good, in the face sometimes of the chief of a kingdom. Now Christ is our lawyer, and stands up to plead, not only sometimes, but always, for his people, before the God of gods, and that not in a corner, but while all the host of heaven stands by, both on the right hand and on the left. Nor is it to be doubted, but that our Accuser brings many a sore charge against us into the court. But we have an Advocate, however, that is valiant and courageous, one that will not fail, nor be discouraged, till he has brought judgment into victory. Hence John inserts his name, saying, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ."

Men love to understand a man before they commit their cause to him, namely, whether he be fitly qualified for their business. Well, here is an Advocate propounded, an Advocate to plead our cause against our foe. 'But what is he? What is his name? Is he qualified for my business?' The answer is, It is JESUS CHRIST. 'How! Jesus Christ, that old friend of publicans and sinners! Jesus Christ! he used never to fail! He is used to set his face like a flint against Satan, when he pleads the cause of his people! Is it Jesus Christ?' says the knowing soul; 'then he shall be mine Advocate.'

For my part, I have often wondered, when I have considered what sad causes Jesus Christ sometimes takes in hand, and for what sad souls he sometimes pleads with God his Father. He hath need of a face as hard as flint, else how

could he bear up in that work, in which, for us, sometimes he is employed: a work enough to make angels blush. Some indeed will lightly put off this, and say, It is his office. But I say, his office notwithstanding, the work itself is hard, exceeding hard. When he went to die, had he not despised the shame, he had turned his back upon the cross, and left us in our blood! And now it is his turn to plead, the case would be the same, only he can make argument upon that which to us seems to yield no argument at all, and take courage to plead for a Joshua clothed with filthy garments! "He (saith he) that is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous generation, of him will I be ashamed, &c." Mark viii. 38. Hence it follows, that Christ will be ashamed of some. But why not ashamed of others? It is not because their cause is good; but because they are kept from denying him professedly. Wherefore for such he will force himself, and will set his face like a flint, and will, without shame, own, plead, and improve his interest with God for them, even for them whose cause is so horribly bad and gross, that they blush themselves to think on it. But what will not love do? what will not love bear with? and what will not love suffer?

Of all the offices of Jesus Christ, I think this trieth him as much as any. True, his offering himself in a sacrifice tried him greatly, but that was but for a while; his grappling as a Captain with the curse, death, and hell, tried him much, but that also was but for a while; but this office of being an Advocate, though it meets not with such sudden depths of trouble, yet what it wants in shortness it may meet with in length of time. I know Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more. Yet he has not left off, though in heaven, to do some works of service for his saints on earth; for there he pleads as an advocate or lawyer for his people. Heb. viii. 1, 2. And let it be that he has no cause of shame, when he standeth thus up to plead for so vile a wretch as I, who have

so vilely sinned; yet I have cause to think that well he may, and to hold my hands before my face for shame, and to be confounded with shame, while he, to fetch me off from condemnation for my transgressions, sets his face like a flint to plead for me with God, and against my accuser. But thus much for the seventh privilege that they have by Christ, who have him for their Advocate.

8. Another privilege that they have who get Jesus Christ to be their Advocate, is this, *he is always ready, always in court, always with the Judge;* then and there to oppose, if our accuser comes, and to plead against him what is pleadable for his children. And this the text implies, where it saith, "We have an Advocate with the Father," *always* with the Father. Some lawyers, though they are otherwise able and shrewd, yet not being always in court, are ready to suffer their poor clients to be baffled and nonsuited by their adversary; yea, it comes to pass, because of this neglect, that a judgment is got out against them for whom they have undertaken to plead, to their great perplexity and damage. But no such opportunity can Satan have of our Advocate, for he is with the Father, always with the Father, as to be a Priest, so to be an Advocate. "We have an Advocate with the Father." It is said of the priests, they wait at the altar, and that they give attendance there, (1 Cor. ix. 13;) also of the magistrate, that as to his office he should attend continually on this very thing. Rom. xiii. 6. And as these, so Christ, as to his office of an Advocate, attends continually on that office with his Father. "We have an Advocate with the Father," always with the Father. And truly such an Advocate becomes the children of God, because of the vigilance of their enemy; for it is said of him, that he accuseth us day and night, (Rev. xii. 10;) so unweariedly doth he seek and pursue our destruction. But behold how we are provided for him! "We have an Advocate with the Father." If he comes a days, our Advocate is with the Father! If he comes a

nights, our Advocate is with the Father! Thus then is our Advocate ready to put check to Satan, come when he will or can to accuse us to the Father. Wherefore these two texts are greatly to be minded; one of them, for it shows us the restlessness of our enemy; the other, for it shows us the diligence of our Advocate.

That also in the Hebrews shows us the carefulness of our Advocate, where it saith, he is gone, "into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. ix. 24. Now—just the time present; now—the time always present; now—let Satan come when he will. Nor is it to be omitted, that this word *now*, that thus specifies the time, the present time, doth also conclude it to be that time in which we are imperfect in grace, in which we have many failings, in which we are tempted and accused of the devil to God; this is the time, and in it, and every whit of it, he now appeareth in the presence of God for us. O the diligence of our enemy! O the diligence of our Friend! The one against us, the other for us, and that continually! "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This then, that Jesus Christ is always an Advocate with the Father for us, and so continually ready to put a check to every accusation that Satan brings into the presence of God against us, is another of the privileges that they have who have Jesus Christ for their Advocate.

9. Another privilege that they have who have Jesus Christ to be their Advocate, is this, *he is such a one as will not by bribes, by flattery, or fair pretences, be turned aside from pursuing his client's business.* This was the fault of lawyers in old time, that they would wrest judgment for a bribe. Hence the Holy One complained, that a bribe did use to blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the judgment of the righteous. 1 Sam. xii. 3; Amos v. 12; Deut. xvi. 19. There are three things in judgment that a lawyer must take heed of. One is the nature of the offence; the other, is the mean-

ing and intendment of the law-makers; and a third, is to plead for them in danger, without respect to affection or reward. And this is the excellency of our Advocate, he will not, cannot be biassed to turn aside from doing judgment; and this the apostle intendeth when he calleth our Advocate "Jesus Christ the righteous." "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" or as another prophet calls him, "The just Lord," one that will do no iniquity, that is, no unrighteousness in judgment. Zeph. iii. 5. He will not be provoked to do it, neither, by the continual provocations wherewith, by reason of thy infirm condition, thou dost often tempt him to do it. And remember that thy Advocate pleads by the new covenant, and thine adversary accuses by the old; and again remember, that the new covenant is better and more richly provided with grounds of pleading for our pardon and salvation, than the old can be with grounds for a charge to be brought in by the devil against us, suppose our sin be ever so heinous. It is a better covenant, established upon better promises.

Now, put these two together, namely, that Jesus Christ is righteous, and will not swerve in judgment; also that he pleads for us by the new law, with which Satan hath nothing to do, nor (had he) can he by it bring in a plea against us; Jer. xxxi. 29–34; Ezek. xxxvi. 25–30; Heb. viii. 8–13. Because that law, in the very body of it, consists in free promises of giving grace unto us, and of an everlasting forgiveness of our sin. O children! your Advocate will stick to the law, to the new law, to the new and everlasting covenant, and will not admit that any thing should be pleaded by our foe that is inconsistent with the promise of the gift of grace, and of the remission of all sin. This therefore is another privilege that they are made partakers of, who have Jesus Christ to be their Advocate; he is just, he is righteous, he is "Jesus Christ the righteous;" he will not be turned aside to judge awry, either of the crime or the law, for favor or

affection. Nor is there any sin committed but what is pardonable, to those that have chosen Jesus Christ to be their Advocate.

10. Another privilege that they have who have Jesus Christ to be their Advocate, is this; *the Father has made him, even him that is thine Advocate, the umpire and judge in all matters that have befallen, do, or shall fall out betwixt him and us.* Mark this well; for when the Judge himself, before whom I am accused, shall make mine Advocate the judge of the nature of the crime for which I am accused, and of matter of law by which I am accused, that is, whether it is in force against me to condemnation, or whether by the law of grace I am set free, (especially since my Advocate has espoused my cause, promised me deliverance, and pleaded my right to the state of eternal life,) must it not go well with me? Yes, verily. The Judge then making thine Advocate the judge, (for he "hath committed all judgment unto the Son," John v. 22,) hath done it also for thy sake, who hath chosen him to be thine Advocate. It was a great thing that happened to Israel, when Joseph was become their advocate, and when Pharaoh had made him a judge. "Thou (says he) shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt; only on the throne I will be greater than thou." Gen. xli. 39, 40, 44. Joseph in this was a type of Christ; and his government here, of the government of Christ for his church. Kings seldom make a man's judge his advocate; they seldom leave the issue of the whole affair to the arbitration of the poor man's lawyer; but when they do, methinks it should even go to the heart's desire of the client, whose the advocate is; especially when, as I said before, the cause of the client is become the concern of the advocate, and they are both wrapped up in the self-same

interest. And yet thus it is with that soul who has Jesus Christ for his Advocate.

What sayst thou, poor heart, to this? The Judge, that is, the God of heaven, has made thy Advocate arbitrator in thy business; he is to judge; God has referred the matter to him, and he has a concern in thy concern, an interest in thy good speed. Christian man! dost thou hear? Thou hast put thy cause into the hand of Jesus Christ, and hast chosen him to be thine Advocate, to plead for thee before God, and against thy Adversary: and God has referred the judgment of that matter to thy Advocate, so that he has power to determine the matter. I know Satan is not pleased with this, he had rather things should have been referred to himself, and then woe had been to the child of God; but, I say, God has referred the business to Jesus Christ, has made him umpire and judge in thine affair. Art thou also willing that he should decide the matter? Canst thou say unto him as David, "Judge me, and plead my cause, O Lord." Ps. xliii. 1.

O the care of God towards his people, and his desire of their welfare! He has provided them an Advocate, and has referred all causes and things that may by Satan be objected and brought in against us, to the judgment and sentence of Christ our Advocate. But to come to a conclusion for this: and therefore,

11. The advantage that he has, that has the Lord Jesus for his Advocate, is very great; thy Advocate has the cause, has the law, has the Judge, has the purse, and so consequently has all that is requisite for an Advocate to have; since together with these he has heart, he has wisdom, he has courage, and loves to make the best improvement of his advantages for the benefit of his client. And that which adds to all is, *he can prove the debt paid about which Satan makes such ado*; a price given for the ransom of my soul, and for the pardon of my sins. Lawyers do use to make a great matter of it, when they can prove, that that very

debt is paid for which their client is sued at law. Now this Christ Jesus himself is witness to; yea, he himself has paid it, and that out of his own purse, for us, with his own hands, before and upon the mercy-seat, according as the law requireth. Lev. xvi. 13–15; Heb. ix. 11–24. What then can accrue to our enemy, or what advantage can he get by thus vexing and troubling the children of the Most High? Certainly nothing but, as has been said already, to be cast down; for the kingdom of our God, which is a kingdom of grace, and the power of his Christ, will prevail. Samson's power lay in his hair; but Christ's power, his power to deliver us from the accusation and charge of Satan, lieth in the worth of, his undertakings. And hence it is said again, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb," (Rev. xii. 10–12;) and he was cast out and down.

And thus much for the privileges that those are made partakers of, who have Jesus Christ to be their Advocate.

CHAPTER VI.

NECESSITY OF SUCH AN ADVOCATE.

I COME now to the fifth thing, which is, To show you what NECESSITY there is that Christ should be our Advocate.

That Christ should be a Priest to offer a sacrifice, a King to rule, and a Prophet to teach, all seeing men acknowledge is of necessity; but that he should be an Advocate, a pleader for his people, few see the reason of it. But he is an Advocate, and as an Advocate has a work and employ distinct from his priestly, kingly, or prophetical office. John says, he is our Advocate, and signifieth also the nature of his work as such, in that very place where he asserteth his office; and as I have already showed you the nature, I will now show you the necessity of this office.

1. It is necessary, *for the more full and ample vindication of the justice of God*, against all the cavils of the infernal spirits. Christ died on earth to declare the justice of God to men, in his justifying the ungodly. God standeth upon the vindication of his justice, as well upon the act thereof. Hence the Holy Ghost, by the prophets and the apostles so largely disputeth for the vindication thereof, (Rom. iii. 24; Isa.; Jer.; Mal.;) while it asserteth the reality of the pardon of sin, the justification of the unworthy, and their glorification with God. Rom. iii., iv., viii.; Gal. iii. iv. I say, it disputeth for the justness of this high act of God against the cavils of implacable sinners. Now the prophets and apostles, in those disputes by which they seek to vindicate the justice of God in the salvation of sinners, are not only ministers of God to us, but advocates for him; since as Elihu has it, they "speak on God's be-

half," (Job xxxvi. 2;) or as the margin has it, "I will show thee that there are yet words for God;" words to be spoken and pleaded against his enemies for the justification of his actions. Now, as it is necessary that there should be advocates for God on earth, to plead for his justice and holiness, while he saveth sinners, against the cavils of an ungodly people; so it is necessary that there should be an Advocate also in heaven, that may there vindicate the same justice and holiness of God from all these charges that the fallen angels are apt to charge it with, while it consenteth that we, the ungodly, should be saved.

That the fallen angels are bold enough to charge God to his face with unjustness of language, is evident in the 1st and 2nd of Job; and that they should not be as bold to charge him with unjustness of actions, nothing can be showed to the contrary. Further that God seeks to clear himself of this unjust charge of Satan, is as manifest; for all the troubles of his servant Job were chiefly to that purpose. And why he should have one also in heaven to plead for the justness of his doing in the forgiveness and salvation of sinners, seems also as necessary; even because there is an Advocate with the Father, seeking to vindicate his justice, while he pleads with him for us against the devil and his objections.

God is wonderfully pleased with his design of saving sinners; it pleases him at heart. And since he also is infinitely just, it is needful an Advocate should be appointed to show, how in a way of justice, as well as mercy, a sinner may be saved.

The good angels did not at first see so far into the mysteries of the gospel of the grace of God, but that they needed further light therein, for the vindication of their Lord, as servants; wherefore they yet did pry and look narrowly into it further, and also bowed down their heads and hearts to learn yet more, by the church, of the manifold wisdom of

God. 1 Pet. i. 12; Eph. iii. 9, 10. And if the *standing* angels were not yet to the utmost, perfect in the knowledge of this mystery, (and yet surely they must know more thereof than those that *fell* could do;) no wonder if those devils, whose enmity could not but animate their ignorance, made and do make their cavils against justice, insinuating, that it is not impartial and exact, because it, as it is just, justifieth the ungodly.

That Satan will quarrel with God, I have showed you; and that he will also dispute against his works with the holy angels, is more than intimated by the apostle Jude, verse 9. And why not quarrel with, and accuse the justice of God as unrighteous, for consenting to the salvation of sinners, since his best qualifications are most profound and prodigious attempts to dethrone the Lord God of his power and glory?

Nay, all this is evident, since "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And again, I say, it is evident, that one part of his work as an Advocate, is to vindicate the justice of God, while he pleadeth for our salvation, because he pleadeth a propitiation; for a propitiation respects God as well as us, the appeasing of his wrath, and the reconciling of his justice to us, as well as the redeeming of us from death and hell; yea, it therefore doth the one, because it doth the other. Now, if Christ as an Advocate, pleads a propitiation with God, for whose conviction doth he plead it? Not for God; for *He* has ordained it, allows it, and gloriously acquiesces therein because he knows the whole virtue thereof. It is therefore for the conviction of the fallen angels, and for the confounding of all those cavils that can be invented and objected against our salvation, by those most subtile and envious ones. But,

2. *There is matter of law to be objected, and that both against God and us.* At least there seems to be so, because of the sanction that God has put upon the law, and also because we have sinned against it.

God has said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and "The soul that sinneth it shall die." God also standeth, still upon the vindication of his justice; he also saveth sinners. Now, in comes our Accuser, and chargeth us with sin, of being guilty of sin because we have transgressed the law. God also will not be put out of his way or steps of grace to save us: also he will say, he is just and righteous still. Aye, but these are but say-sos. How shall this be proved? Why, now here is room for an Advocate that can plead to matter of law, that can preserve the sanction of the law, in the salvation of the sinner. "He will magnify the law and make it honorable." Isa. xlii. 21. The margin saith, "And make him honorable;" that is, he shall save the sinner, and preserve the holiness of the law, and the honor of his God. But who is this that can do this? It is the "servant" of God, saith the prophet, ver. 1–13. The Lord—"a man of war." But how can this be done by him? The answer is, It shall be done, "For God is well pleased for his righteousness' sake:" for it is by that he magnifies the law, and makes his Father honorable; that is, he, as a public person, comes into the world under the law, fulfils it, and having so done, he gives that righteousness away; for he as to his own person, never had need thereof: I say he gives that righteousness to those that have need, to those that have none of their own, "that righteousness might be imputed to them."

This righteousness then he presenteth to God for us, and God for this righteousness sake, is well pleased that we should be saved, and for it can save us, and secure his honor, and preserve the law in its sanction. And this Christ pleadeth against Satan, as an Advocate with the Father for us; by which he vindicates his Father's justice, holdeth the child of God, notwithstanding his sins, in a state of justification, and utterly overthroweth and confoundeth the devil.

For Christ, in pleading thus, appeals to the law itself, if

he has not done it justice, saying, 'Most mighty law, what command of thine have I not fulfilled? What demand of thine have I not fully answered? Where is that jot or tittle of the law, that is able to object against my doings for want of satisfaction?' Here the law is mute; it speaketh not one word by way of the least complaint, but rather testifies of this righteousness, that it is good and holy. Rom. iii. 22, 23; 15, 19. Now then, since Christ did this as a public person, it follows, that others must be justified thereby; for that was the end and reason of Christ's taking on him to do the righteousness of the law. Nor can the law object against the equity of this dispensation of heaven; for why might not that God, who gave the law its being and its sanction, dispose, as he pleases, of the righteousness which it commendeth? Besides, if men be made righteous, they are so; and if by a righteousness which the law commendeth, how can fault be found with them by the law! Nay, it is "witnessed by the law and the prophets," who consent that it should be unto all, and upon all that believe, for their justification. Rom. iii. 20, 21.

And that the mighty God suffereth the prince of the devils to do with the law what he can, against this most wholesome and godly doctrine, it is to show the truth, goodness, and permanency thereof; for this is as if he should say, 'Devil, do thy worst.' When the law is in the hand of an easy pleader, though the cause that he pleadeth be good, a crafty opposer may overthrow the right; but here is the salvation of the children in debate, whether it can stand with law and justice; the opposer of this is the devil, his argument against it is the law; he that defends the doctrine is Christ, the Advocate, who in his plea must justify the justice of God, defend the holiness of the law, and save the sinner from all the arguments, pleas, stops, and demurs, that Satan is able to put in against it. And this he must do fairly, righteously, simply; pleading the voice of the self-same law

for the justification of what he standeth for, which Satan pleads against it. For though it is by the new law that our salvation comes, yet by the old law is the new law approved of, and the way of salvation thereby by it consented to.

This shows, therefore, that Christ is not ashamed to own the way of our justification and salvation; no, not before men and devils. It shows also, that he is resolved to dispute and plead for the same, though the devil himself shall oppose it. And since our adversary pretends a plea in law against it, it is meet that there should be an open hearing before the Judge of all about it; but forasmuch as we neither can nor dare appear to plead for ourselves, our good God has thought fit we should do it by an Advocate. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

This therefore is the second thing that shows the need that we have of an Advocate; namely, our adversary pretends that he has a plea in law against us, and that by law we should be otherwise disposed of, than to be made possessors of the heavenly kingdom. But,

3. *There are many things relating to the promises, to our lives, and to the threatenings, that minister matter of question and doubts*, and give the advantage of objections unto him that so eagerly desireth to be putting in cavils against our salvation; all which it hath pleased God to repel by Jesus Christ our Advocate.

There are, first, many things relating to *the promises*, as to the largeness or straitness of words, as to the freeness or conditionality of them, which we are not able so well to understand; and therefore, when Satan dealeth with us about them, we quickly fall to the ground before him. We often conclude, that the words of the promise are too narrow and strait to comprehend us; we also think verily that the conditions of some promises do utterly shut us out from hope of justification and life. But our Advocate, who is for

us with the Father, is better acquainted with, and learned in the law, than to be baffled out with a bold word or two, (Isa. l. 4,) or with a subtile piece of hellish sophistication. He knows the true purport, intent, meaning, and sense of every promise and piece of promise that is in the whole Bible, and can tell how to plead it for advantage, against our accuser, and doth so. And I gather it not only from his contest, with Satan for Joshua, (Zech. iii.,) and from his conflict with him in the wilderness, (Matt. iv.,) and in heaven, (Rev. xii.,) but also from the practice of Satan's emissaries here; for what his angels do, that doth he. Now there is nothing more apparent, than that the instruments of Satan do plead against the church, from the pretended intricacy, ambiguity, and difficulty of the promise; whence I gather, so doth Satan before the tribunal of God. But there we have one to match him! "We have an Advocate with the Father," that knows law and judgment better than Satan, and statute and commandment better than all his angels; and by the verdict of our Advocate, all the words, and limits, and extensions of words, with all conditions of the promises, are expounded and applied. And hence it is, that it sometimes so falleth out, that the very promise we have thought could not reach us, to comfort us by any means, has at another time swallowed us up with joy unspeakable. Christ, the true Prophet, has the right understanding of the word as an Advocate, has pleaded it before God against Satan; and having overcome him at the common law, he hath sent to let us know it by his good Spirit, to our comfort, and the confusion of our enemies. Again,

There are many things relating to *our lives*, that minister to our Accuser occasion of many objections against our salvation. For, besides our daily infirmities, sometimes there are in our lives gross sins, and many horrible backslidings; also we ofttimes suck in many abominable errors and deceitful opinions; of all which Satan accuseth us before the judg-

ment-seat of God, and pleadeth hard that we may be damned for ever for them. Besides, some of these things are done, after light received, against present convictions and dissuasions to the contrary, against solemn engagements to amendment when the bonds of love were upon us. These are crying sins; they have a loud voice in themselves against us, and give to Satan great advantage and boldness to sue for our destruction before the bar of God. Nor doth he want skill to aggravate, and to comment profoundly upon all occasions and circumstances that did attend us in these our miscarriages; namely, that we did it without a cause, and also when we have had many things to help us against such sins, had we had grace to have used them, and to have kept us clean and upright. There is also "a sin unto death," (1 John v.;) and he can tell how to labor, by argument and sleight of speech, to make our transgressions not only to border upon, but to appear in the hue, shape, and figure of that, and there to make his objection against our salvation.

Satan often argueth thus *with us*, and fasteneth the weight of his reasons upon our consciences, to the almost utter destruction of us, and the bringing of us down to the gates of despair and utter destruction. The same sins, with their aggravating circumstances, as I said, he pleadeth against us at the bar of God. But there he meeteth with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Advocate, who entereth his plea against him, unravels all his reasons and arguments against us, and shows the guile and falsehood of them. He (Christ) also pleadeth as to the nature of the sins; as also to those high aggravations; and proveth, that neither the sin in itself, nor yet as joined with all its aggravating circumstances, can be the sin unto death; because we hold the Head, and have not made shipwreck of the faith, (Col. ii. 19; 1 Tim. i. 19); but still, as David and Solomon, we confess and are sorry for our sins. Thus, though we seem, with Peter, through our falls, to come short of the promise, (Heb. iv. 3,) and leave our transgres-

sions as stumbling-blocks to the world with Solomon, and minister occasion of a question of our salvation among the godly; yet our Advocate fetches us off before God, and we shall be found safe (and in heaven at last) by them in the next world, who were afraid they had lost us in this.

But all these points must be managed by Christ for us against Satan. As a Lawyer, an Advocate, he to that end now appears in the presence of God for us, and wisely handleth the very crisis of the word, and of the failings of his people; together with all those nice and critical juggles by which our adversary laboreth to bring us down, to the confusion of his face.

There are also *the threatenings* that are annexed to the gospel; and they fall now under our consideration. They are of two sorts: such as reject those who altogether reject the gospel; and those who profess it, yet fall from that profession.

The first sort of threatening cannot be pleaded against the professors of the gospel, as against those that never professed it. Wherefore he undertaketh to manage those threats against *us*, which belong to those that have professed, and have fallen from it. Joshua fell in it. (Zech. iii. 1, 2.) Judas fell from it. (Ps. cix. 6.) And the Accuser stands at their right hand, before the judgment-seat of God, to resist them by pleading the threats against them, namely, that God's soul should have no pleasure in them. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Here is a plea for Satan, both against the one and the other; for they are both apostatized, both drawn back, and he is subtle enough to manage it. Aye, but Satan, here is also matter sufficient for a plea for our Advocate against thee; forasmuch as the next words distinguish betwixt drawing back, and drawing back unto perdition. Every one that draws back, doth not draw back unto perdition. Heb. x. 38, 39. Some of them draw back from, and some in the profession of the gospel. Judas drew

back from, and Peter in the profession of his faith; wherefore Judas perishes, but Peter turns again; because Judas drew back unto perdition, but Peter yet believed to the saving of the soul. Nor doth Jesus Christ, when he sees it is to no purpose, at any time step in to endeavor to save the soul. Wherefore, as for Judas, for his backsliding from the faith, Christ turns him to Satan, and leaveth him in his hand, saying, "When he shall be judged let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin." Psa. cix. 7. But he did not serve Peter so. "The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged." Ps. xxxvii. 33. He will pray for him before, and plead for him after he has been in the temptation, and so secure him, by virtue of his advocateship, from the lash of the threatening that is made against final apostacy. But,

4. The necessity of the Advocate's office in Jesus Christ appears plainly in this, *to plead about the judgments, distresses, afflictions, and troubles, that we meet withal in this life for our sins.* For though, by virtue of this office, Christ fully takes us off from the condemnation that unbelievers undergo for their sins, yet he doth not thereby exempt us from temporal punishments; for we see and feel that they daily overtake us. But for proportioning the punishment for transgression, as that comes under the censure of the law, it is fit we should have an Advocate that understands both law and judgment, to plead for equal distribution of chastisement, according, I say, to the law of grace; and this the Lord Jesus doth.

Suppose a man, for transgression, be indited at the assizes; his adversary is full of malice, and would have him punished sorely, beyond what by the law is provided for such offence; and he pleads, that the judge will afflict and punish as he in his malicious mind desireth. But the man has an advocate there, and he enters his plea against the cruelty of his client's accuser, saying, 'My lord, it cannot be as our enemy

would have it; the punishment for these transgressions is prescribed by that law that we here ground our plea upon: nor may it be declined to satisfy his envy: we stand here upon matters of law, and appeal to law.' And this is the work of our Advocate in heaven. Punishments for the sins of the children come not headlong; nor without measure, as our Accuser would have them; nor yet as they fall upon those who have none to plead their cause. Hath he smote the children according to the stroke wherewith he hath smitten others? No. "In measure, when it shooteth forth, (or seeks to exceed due bounds,) thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind." Isa. xxvii. 7, 8. 'Thou wilt debate with it,' that is, inquiring and reasoning by the law, whether the shootings forth of the affliction (now going out for the offence committed) be not too strong, too heavy, too hot, and of too long a time admitted to distress and break the spirit of this Christian; and if it be, he applies himself to the rule to measure it by, he fetches forth his plumb-line, and sets it in the midst of his people; (Amos vii. 8; Is. xxviii. 17;) and lays righteousness to that, and will not suffer it to go further. But according to the terms, bounds, limits, and measures, which the law of grace admits, so shall the punishment be.

Satan often saith of us, when we have sinned, as Abishai said of Shimei after he had cursed David, 'Shall not this man die for this?' 2 Sam. xix. 21. But Jesus, our Advocate, answers as David, 'What have I to do with thee, O Satan? Thou this day art an enemy to me; thou seekest for a punishment for the transgressions of my people, above what is allotted to them by the law of grace, under which they are; and beyond what their relation that they stand in to my Father and myself will admit.' Wherefore, as Advocate, he pleadeth against Satan, when he brings in against us a charge for sins committed, for the regulating of punishments, both as to the nature, degree, and continuation of

punishment. And this is the reason why, when we are judged, we are not condemned, but chastened, "that we should not be condemned with the world." 1 Cor. xi. 32. Hence David says, the Lord had not given him over to the will of his enemy. Psalm xxvii. 12. And again, "The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death." Psalm xviii. 18. Satan's plea was, that the Lord would give David over to his will, and to the tyranny of death. 'No,' says our Advocate, 'that must not be; to do so would be an affront to the covenant under which grace has put them; that would be to deal with them by a covenant of works, under which they are not. There is a rod for children; and stripes for those of them that transgress. This rod is in the hand of a father, and must be used according to the law of that relation; not for the destruction, but correction of the children; not to satisfy the rage of Satan, but to vindicate the holiness of my Father; not to drive them further from, but to bring them nearer to their God.' But,

5. The necessity of the advocateship of Jesus Christ is also manifest in this, that *there is need of one to plead the efficacy of old titles to our eternal inheritance*, when our interests thereunto seems questionable by reason of new transgressions. That God's people may by their new and repeated sins, as to reason at least, endanger their interest in the eternal inheritance, is manifested by such groanings of theirs as these, "Why dost thou cast me off." Psalm xliii. 2; li. 11. "Cast me not away from thy presence." And, "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?" Psalm lxxiv. 1. Yet I find in the book of Leviticus, that though any of the children of Israel should have sold, mortgaged, or made away with their inheritance, they did not thereby utterly make void their title to an interest therein, but it should again return to them, and they again enjoy the possession of it in the year of jubilee: "In the year of this

jubilee, (saith God,) ye shall return every man to his possession." "The land shall not be sold for ever, (nor be quite cut off:) for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession, ye shall grant a redemption for the land." Lev. xxv.

The man in Israel that, by waxing poor, did sell his land in Canaan, was surely a type of the Christian who by sin and decays in grace, has forfeited his place and inheritance in heaven. But as the ceremonial law provided that the poor man in Canaan should not by his poverty lose his portion in Canaan for ever, but that it should return to him in the year of jubilee; so the law of grace has provided, that the children shall not for their sin lose their inheritance in heaven for ever, but it shall return to them in the other world. 1 Cor. xi. 32. All therefore that happeneth in this case is, they may live without the comfort of it here, as he that sold his house in Canaan might live without the enjoyment of it till the jubilee. They may also seem to come short of it when they die, as he in Canaan did, that deceased before the year of jubilee. But as certainly as he that died in Canaan before the jubilee did yet receive again his inheritance, by the hand of his relative survivor, when the jubilee came; so certainly shall he that dieth, and that seemeth in his dying to come short of the celestial inheritance now, be yet admitted, at his rising again, to the repossession of his old inheritance at the day of judgment.

But now here is room for a caviller to object, and to plead against the children, saying, 'They have forfeited their part of paradise, by their sin; what right then shall they have to the kingdom of heaven?' Now let the Lord stand up to plead; for he is Advocate for the children. Yea, let him plead the sufficiency of their first title to the kingdom, and that it is not their doings can sell the land for ever. The reason why the children of Israel could not sell the land for ever, was because the Lord, their head, reserved to himself

a right therein. "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine." Suppose two or three children have a lawful title to such an estate, but they are all profuse and prodigal, and there is a brother also that has by law a chief right to the same estate; this brother may hinder the estate from being sold for ever, because it is his inheritance, and he may, when the limited time that his brethren had sold their share therein is out, if he will, restore it to them again. And in the mean time, if any that are unjust should go about utterly and for ever to deprive his brethren, he may stand up and plead for them, that in the law the land cannot be sold for ever; for that it is his as well as theirs; he being resolved not to part with his right. O my brethren! Christ will not part with his right of the inheritance unto which you are also born! Your profuseness and prodigality shall not make him let go his hold that he hath for you of heaven; nor can you, according to law, sell the land for ever, since it is his, and he hath the principal and chief title thereto. This also gives him ground to stand up to plead for you against all those that would hold the kingdom from you for ever; for let Satan say what he can against you, yet Christ can say, 'The land is mine,' and consequently that his brethren could not sell it.

'Yes, they may,' says Satan, 'if the inheritance be divided.'

'O but,' says Christ, 'the land is undivided; no man has his part set out and turned over to himself. Besides, my brethren yet are under age, and I am made their guardian; they have not power to sell the land for ever; the land is mine. Also my Father has made me feofee in trust for my brethren, that they may have what is allotted them when they are all come to a perfect manhood, ("to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv. 12, 13,) and not before; and I will reserve it for them till then: and thus to

do is the will of my Father, the law of the Judge, and also my unchangeable resolution.'

And what can Satan say against this plea? Can he prove that Christ has no interest in the saints' inheritance? Can he prove that we are at age, or that our several parts of the heavenly house are already delivered into our power? And if he goes about to do this, is not the law of the land against him? Doth it not say, that our Advocate is Lord of all, (Acts x. 36;) that the kingdom is Christ's; that it is laid up in heaven for us, (Eph. v. 5; Col. i. 5;) yea, that the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation? 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5.

Thus therefore is our heavenly inheritance made good by our Advocate, against the thwartings and branglings of the devil; nor can our new sins make it invalid, but it abideth safe to us at last, notwithstanding our weakness; though, if we sin, we may have but little comfort or but little of its present profits while we live in this present world. A spendthrift, though he loses not his title, may yet lose the present benefit; but the principal will come again at last, for "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

6. The necessity of the advocateship of Jesus Christ for us, further appears in this, namely, *that our evidences, which declare that we have a right to the eternal inheritance, are often out of our own hand,* yea, and also sometimes kept long from us; the which we come not at the sight or comfort of again, but by our Advocate; especially when our evidences are taken from us, because of a present forfeiture of this inheritance to God, by this or that most foul offence. Evidences, when they are thus taken away, as in David's case, they were, (Psalm li. 12;) why then, they are in our God's hand, laid up, I say, from the sight of them to whom

they belong, till they even forget the contents thereof. 2 Pet. i. 5–9.

Now, when writings and evidences are out of the hand of the owners, and laid up in the court where in justice they ought to be kept, they are not ordinarily got thence again, but by the help of a lawyer, an Advocate. Thus it is with the children of God: we do often forfeit our interest in eternal life; but the mercy is, the forfeit falls into the hand of God, (not of the law, nor of Satan;) wherefore he taketh away also our evidences, if not all, yet some of them, as he saith, "I have taken away my peace from this people, even loving-kindness and mercies." Jer. xvi. 5. This he took from David, (1 Chron. xvii. 13; Psalm li. 12;) and he intreats for the restoration of it, saying, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit;" and, "Lord, turn us again; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Psalm lxxx. 3, 7, 19.

Satan now also hath an opportunity to plead against us, and to help forward the affliction, as his servants did of old, when God was but a little angry. Zech. i. 15. But Jesus Christ our Advocate is ready to appear against him, and to send us from heaven our old evidences again, or to signify to us that they are yet good and authentic, and cannot be gainsaid. "Gabriel (saith he) make this man understand the vision." Dan. viii. 16. And again, saith he to another, "Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls." Jerusalem had been in captivity; had lost many evidences of God's favor and love by reason of her sin, and her enemy stept in to augment her sin and sorrow. But there was a man among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom, that did prevail with God to say, 'I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies;' and then commands it to be proclaimed, that his "cities through prosperity shall be spread abroad." Zech. i. 11–17. Thus, by virtue of our Advocate, we are either made to receive our old evidences

for heaven again, or else are made to understand that they yet are good, and stand valid in the court of heaven; nor can they be made ineffectual, but shall abide the test at last, because our Advocate is also concerned in the inheritance of the saints in light. Christians know what it is to lose their evidences for heaven, and receive them again, or to hear that they hold their title by them; but perhaps they know not how they come at this privilege. Therefore the apostle tells them, they have an Advocate. And that by him, as Advocate, they enjoy all these advantages, is manifest, because his advocate's office is appointed for our help when we sin, that is, commit sins that are great and heinous. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate."

By him the justice of God is vindicated, the law answered, the threatenings taken off, the measure of affliction that for sin we undergo, determined; our titles to eternal life preserved, and our comfort of them restored, notwithstanding the wit, and rage, and envy of hell. So then Christ gave himself for us as a Priest, died for us as a Sacrifice; but pleadeth justice and righteousness, in a way of justice and righteousness (for such is his sacrifice) for our salvation, from the death that is due to our foul or high transgressions, as an Advocate.

CHAPTER VII.

VARIOUS OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

VI. Thus have I given you an account of the nature, end, and necessity of the advocateship of Jesus Christ; and should now come to application: only I must first remove an objection or two.

Objection 1. 'But what need of all these offices of Jesus Christ? Or, what need you trouble us with these nice distinctions? It is enough for us to believe in Christ in general, without considering him under this or that office.'

Answer The wisdom of God is not to be charged with needless doing, when it giveth to Jesus Christ such variety of offices, and calleth him to so many employments for us: they are all thought necessary by heaven, and therefore should not be counted superfluous by earth. And, to put a question on thy objection, What is a Sacrifice without a priest, or a Priest without a sacrifice? And the same I say of his advocate's office. What is an Advocate without the exercise of his office? And what need of an advocate's office being exercised, if Christ, as sacrifice and priest, was thought sufficient by God? Each of these offices is sufficient for perfecting the work for which it is designed: but they are not all designed for the self-same particular thing. Christ, as Sacrifice, offers not himself; it is Christ, as Priest, does that. Christ, as Priest, dieth not for our sins; it is Christ, as sacrifice, does so. Again, Christ, as a Sacrifice and a Priest, limits himself to these two employments; but as an Advocate he launches into a third. And since these are not confounded in heaven, nor by the scripture, they should not, in our apprehension, be counted useless.

It is not therefore enough for us that we exercise our thoughts upon Christ in a general way; but we must learn to know him in all his offices, and to know the nature of his offices also. Our condition requires this, as we are guilty of sin, as we have to do with God, and with our enemy the devil. As we are guilty of sin, so we need a Sacrifice; and as we are also sinners, we need one to present our sacrifice to God for us. We have need also of him as a Priest, to present our persons and services to God. And since God is just, and upon the judgment-seat; and since also we are apt to sin grievously, and again, since we have an Accuser who will by law plead at this bar of God our sins against us, to the end we may be condemned, we have need of, and also have "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Alas! How many of God's precious people, for want of a distinct knowledge of Christ in his offices, are at this day sadly baffled with the sophistications of the devil? To instance no more than this one thing: when they have committed some heinous sin after light received, how are they tossed, and vexed with many perplexities! They cannot come to any anchor in their troubled sea; they go from promise to promise, from this to that office of Jesus Christ, but forget that he is (or else understand not what it is to be) an Advocate for them. Hence they so oft sink under the fears that their sin is unpardonable, and that therefore their condition is desperate; whereas if they would but consider that Christ is their Advocate, and that he is therefore made an Advocate, to save them from those high transgressions that are committed by them, and that he waits upon this office continually before the judgment-seat of God, they would conceive relief, and be made to hold up their head, and so more strongly wrest themselves from under that guilt and burden (those ropes and cords wherewith, by their folly, they have so strongly bound themselves) than commonly they have done, or do.

Objection 2. 'But notwithstanding what you have said, this sin is a deadly stick in my way; it will not out of my mind, my cause being bad, but Christ will desert me.'

Answer. It is true, sin is, and will be a deadly stick and stop to faith, attempt to exercise it on Christ as considered under which of his offices or relations you will; and, above all, the sin of unbelief is the sin that doth "so," or "most easily beset us." Heb. xii. 1, 2. And no marvel, for it never acts alone, but is backed not only with guilt and ignorance, but also with carnal sense and reason. He that is ignorant of this, knows but little of himself, or what believing is. He that undertakes to believe, sets upon the hardest task that ever was proposed to man; not because the things imposed upon us are unreasonable or unaccountable, but because the heart of man, the more true any thing is, the more it sticks and stumbles thereat. "And *because* I tell you the truth, (says Christ,) ye believe me not." John viii. 45. Hence believing is called laboring, Heb. iv. 11. And it is the sorest labor (at times) any man can take in hand, because assaulted with the greatest oppositions. But believe thou must, be the labor ever so hard; and that not only in Christ in a general way, but in him as to his several offices, and to this of his advocateship in particular; else some sins and temptations will not, in their guilt or trouble, easily depart from thy conscience; no, not by promise, nor by thy attempts to apply the same by faith. And this the text insinuates, by its setting forth Christ as Advocate, as the only, or best and most speedy way of relief to the soul in certain cases.

There is then an order that thou must observe in exercising thy soul in a way of believing. 1. Thou must believe unto justification in general. And for this thou must direct thy soul to the Lord Christ, as he is a sacrifice for sin; and as a priest offering that sacrifice, thou shalt see him appeasing divine wrath for thy sin; and as a Priest spreading the skirt of his garment over thee, to hide thy nakedness; thus

being clothed, thou shalt not be found naked. 2. This when thou hast done as well as thou canst, thou must, in the next place, keep thy eye upon the Lord Christ, as Priest in heaven, improving the sacrifice which he offered on earth, for continuing thee in a state of justification thy lifetime, notwithstanding those common infirmities that attend thee, and to which thou art incident in all thy best performances. Rom. v. 10; Exod. xxviii. 31, 38. Therefore he is a Priest in heaven, and by his sacrifice interceding for thee. 3. But if thy foot slippeth, if it slippeth greatly, then know thou, it will not be long before a bill be in heaven preferred against thee by the Accuser of the brethren; wherefore then thou must have recourse to Christ as Advocate, to plead before God thy Judge, against the devil thine adversary, for thee. 4. And as to the badness of thy cause, let nothing move thee, save to humility and self-abasement. For Christ is glorified by being concerned for thee; yea, the angels will shout aloud to see him bring thee off. For what greater glory can we conceive Christ to obtain as Advocate, than to bring off his people when they have sinned, notwithstanding Satan's so charging them, for their sins, as he doth? He gloried when he was going to the cross to die; he went up with a shout and the sound of a trumpet, to make intercession for us; and shall we think that by his being an Advocate, he receives no additional glory? It is glory to him, doubtless, to bear the title of an Advocate, and much more to plead and prosper for us against our adversary, as he doth.

And I say again, for thee to think that Christ will reject thee because thy cause is bad, is a kind of thinking blasphemy against this his office and his word. For what doth such a man but side with Satan, while Christ is pleading against him? I say, it is as the devil would have it; for it puts strength into his plea against us, by increasing our sin and wickedness. But shall Christ take our cause in hand, and shall we doubt of good success? This is to count Satan

stronger than Christ; and that he can longer abide to oppose, than Christ can plead for us. Wherefore away with it, not only as to the notion, but also as to the heart and root thereof!

Oh! when shall Jesus Christ our Lord be honored by us as he ought? This dastardly heart of ours, when shall it be more subdued and trodden under foot of faith? When shall Christ ride Lord, and King, and Advocate, upon the faith of his people, as he should? He is exalted before God, before angels, and above all the power of the enemy; there is nothing comes behind but the faith of his people!

Objection 3. 'But since you follow the metaphor so close, I will suppose, if an Advocate be entertained, some recompense must be given him. His fee! who shall pay him his fee? I have nothing. Could I do any thing to make this Advocate part of amends, I could think I might have benefit from him; but I have nothing. What say you to this?'

Answer. Similitudes must not be strained too far; but yet I have an answer for this objection. There is, in some cases, law for them that have no money; aye, law and lawyers too; and this is called suing *in forma pauperis;* and such lawyers are appointed by authority for that purpose. Indeed I know not that it is thus in every nation, but it is sometimes so in England; and this is the way altogether in the kingdom of heaven before the bar of God. All is done there for us in *forma pauperis,* on free cost; for our Advocate or Lawyer is thereto designed and appointed of his Father.

Hence Christ is said to plead the cause, not of the rich and wealthy, but of the poor and needy; not of those that have many friends, but of the fatherless and widow; not of them that are fat and strong, but of those under sore afflictions. Prov. xxii. 22, 23; xxiii. 10, 12; xxxi. 9. "He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul, (Psalm cix. 31;) or as it is in the margin, "from the judges of his soul." This then

is the manner of Jesus Christ with man; he doth freely what he doth, not for price nor reward. "I have raised him up, (says God,) and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for a price nor reward." Isa. xlv. 13.

This, I say, is the manner of Jesus Christ with man; he pleads, he sues *in forma pauperis—gratis*, and of mere compassion; and hence it is that you have his clients giving him *thanks;* for that is all the poor can give. "I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." Psalm cix. 30, 31.

They know but little that talk of *giving* to Christ, except they mean they would give him blessing and praise. He bids us come freely, take freely, and tells us that he will give and do freely. Rev. xxii. 17; xxi. 6. Let him have that which is his own, namely, thyself; for thou art the price of his blood. David speaks very strangely of giving to God for mercy bestowed on him. I call it strangely, because, indeed, it is so to reason. "What (says he) shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" 'I will take this cup of salvation, and call for more.' Psalm cxvi. 12, 13. God has no need of thy gift, nor Christ of thy bribe, to plead thy cause: take thankfully what is offered, and call for more; that is the best giving to God. God is rich enough; talk not then of giving, but of receiving; for thou art poor. Be not too high, nor think thyself too good to live by the alms of heaven. And since the Lord Jesus is willing to serve thee freely, and to maintain thy right to heaven against thy foe, to the saving of thy soul, without price or reward, let the peace of God rule in thee; to the which thou art also called, (as is the rest of the body,) and be thou thankful. Col. iii. 15.

This then is the privilege of a Christian, "We have an

Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" one that pleadeth the cause of his people against those that rise up against them, of his love, pity, and mere good-will. Lord, open the eyes of dark readers, of disconsolate saints, that they may see who is for them, and on what terms!

Objection 4. 'But if Christ doth once begin to plead for me, and shall become mine Advocate, he will always be troubled with me, unless I should of myself forsake him; for I am ever in broils and suits of law. Action after action is laid upon me. I am sometimes ten times in a day summoned to answer my doings before God.'

Answer. Christ is not an Advocate to plead a cause or two. "He delivereth Israel out of all his troubles," (Psalm xxxiv. 17;) and chooses to be an Advocate for such. Therefore the godly of old did use to make, from the greatness of their troubles, and the abundance of their troublers, an argument to the Lord Christ to send and lend them help. "Have mercy upon me, (saith David;) consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me." Psalm ix. 13. And again, "Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be that say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." Psalm iii. 1, 2. Yea, the troubles of this man were so many and great, that his enemies began to triumph over him, saying, "There is no help for him in God." But could he not deliver him, or did the Lord forsake him? No, no! "Thou hast smitten (saith he) all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly." And as he delivereth them from their troubles, so also he pleadeth all their causes. "O Lord, (saith the church,) thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul, thou hast redeemed my life." Lam. iii. 58. Mark, troubled Christian.

Thou sayest thou hast been arrested ofttimes in a day, and as often summoned to appear at God's bar, there to an-

swer to what shall be laid to thy charge. And here for thy encouragement thou readest, that the church hath an Advocate that pleadest the causes of her soul, that is, all her causes, to deliver her. He knows, that so long as we are in this world we are subject to temptation and weakness, and through them made guilty of many bad things; wherefore, he hath prepared himself to our service, and to abide with the Father an Advocate for us. As Solomon saith of a man of great wrath, (Prov. xix. 19,) so it may be said of a man of great weakness, (and the best of saints are such,) he must be delivered again and again. Yea, "many times (saith David) did he deliver them;" (Psalm cvi. 43;) that is, more than once and twice; and he will do so for thee, if thou entertain him to be thine Advocate. Thou talkest of leaving him; but then, whither wilt thou go? all else are vain things, things that cannot profit. 1 Sam. xii. 20–23. And he will not forsake his people, though their land be filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." Jer. li. 5.

I know the modest saint is apt to be abashed, to think what a troublesome one he is, and what a make-work he has been in God's house all his days. And let him be filled with holy blushing; but let him not forsake his Advocate.

CHAPTER VIII.

USES OF THE WHOLE DISCUSSION.

HAVING thus spoken to these objections, let us now come to make some use of the whole.

First Use. First, I would exhort the children of God to *consider the dignity that God hath put upon Jesus Christ their Saviour.* For by how much God hath called his Son to offices and places of trust, by so much he hath heaped dignities upon him. It is said of Mordecai that "he was next to the King Ahasuerus." And what then? Why then, the greatness of Mordecai, and his high advance, must be written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia, (Esther x. 1–3,) to the end his fame might not be buried nor forgot, but remembered and talked of in generations to come. Why, my brethren, God hath exalted Jesus of Nazareth, hath made him the only great One, having given him a name above every name. A name, did I say, 'a name and glory beyond all names, and above all names;' as doth witness both his being set above all, and the many offices which he executeth for God, on behalf of his people.

It is counted no little addition to honor, when men are not only made near to the king, but also intrusted with most, if not with almost all, the most weighty affairs of the kingdom. Why, this is the dignity of Christ. He is, it is true, the natural Son of God, and so high, and one that abounds with honor. But this is not all. God has conferred upon him, as man, all honor. He has made him Lord Mediator betwixt him and the world. This in general. And particularly he hath called him to be a High Priest for ever. Heb. vii. 21–24, and hath sworn he shall not be changed

for another. He hath accepted of his offering once for ever, counting that there is wholly enough, in what he did once, to perfect for ever them that are sanctified, that is, set apart to glory. Heb. x. 11–13. He is Captain-general of all the forces that God hath in heaven and earth, the King and commander of his people. He is Lord of all, and made "head over all things to the church," (Eph. i. 22,) and is our Advocate with the Father. O the exaltation of Jesus Christ!

Let Christians therefore, in the first place, consider this. Nor can it be but profitable to them, if withal they consider that all this trust and honor is put and conferred upon him in relation to the advantage and advancement of Christians. If Christians do but consider the nearness that is betwixt Christ and them, and withal consider how he is exalted, it must needs be matter of comfort to them. 'He is my flesh and my bone that is exalted; it is my friend and my brother that is thus set up and preferred.' It was something to the Jews that Mordecai was exalted to honor; they had thereby ground to rejoice and be glad, for that one of themselves was made by the king, a lord, and governor of the land. It is true, when a man thinks of Christ, as severed from him, he sees but little to his comfort in Christ's exaltation; but when he looks upon Christ, and can say, 'My Saviour! my Priest! the Chief Bishop of my soul!' then he will see much in his being thus promoted to honor.

Consider, then, the glories to which God has exalted our Saviour, in that he hath made him so high. It is comely, also, when thou speakest of him, that thou mention his name with some additional title, thereby to call thy mind to remembrance, and so to the greater reverence of the person of thy Jesus; as, our Lord Jesus, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. 2 Pet. ii. 20; Heb. iii. 1, &c. Men write themselves by their titles, as John, Earl of such a

place, Anthony, Earl of such a place, and Thomas, Lord, &c. It is common also to call men in great places by their titles rather than by their names, as Lord High-chancellor of England, Lord Privy-seal, Lord High-admiral, &c. And thus should Christians make mention of Jesus Christ our Lord, adding to his name some of his titles of honor; especially since all places of trust and titles of honor conferred on him are of special favor to us. I did use to be much taken with one sect of Christians, for that it was usually their way when they made mention of the name of Jesus, to call him "The blessed King of glory." Christians should do thus. It would do them good. For why doth the Holy Ghost, think you, give him all these titles, but that we should call him by them, and so make mention of him one to another? For the very calling of him by this or that title or name, belonging to this or that office of his, giveth us occasion, not only to think of him as exercising that office, but to inquire by the word, by meditation, and one of another, what there is in that office, and what by his exercising of that the Lord Jesus profiteth the church.

How will men stand for that honor that by superiors is given to them? expecting and using all things, that is, actions and carriages, so as that thereby their grandeur may be maintained. And saith Christ, "Ye call me master and Lord: ye say well; for so I am." John xii. 13. Christ Jesus our Lord would have us exercise ourselves in the knowledge of his glorious offices and relative titles, because of the advantage that we get by the knowledge of them, and the reverence of and love to him, that they beget in our hearts. "That disciple (saith the text) whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea; and the other disciples came in a little ship," to shore, to wait on their Lord. John xxi. The very naming of him under

the title of Lord, bowed their hearts forthwith to come with joint readiness to wait upon him. Let this also learn us to distinguish Christ's offices and titles, not to confound them; for he exerciseth those offices, and beareth those titles, for great reason, and to our commodity.

Every circumstance relating both to Christ's humiliation and exaltation, ought to be duly weighed by us, because of that mystery of God, and of man's redemption that is wrapped therein. For as there is not a pin, nor a loop, nor a tack in the tabernacle, but had in it use of instruction to the children of Israel; so there is not any part whether more near or more remote to Christ's suffering and exaltation, but is, could we get into it, full of spiritual advantage to us. To instance: the water that came out of Christ's side, is a thing little taken notice of, either by preacher or hearers, and yet John makes it one of the witnesses of the truth of our redemption, and a confirmation of the certainty of that record that God hath given to the world of the sufficiency that is in his Son to save. John xix. 34; 1 John v. 8.

When I have considered that the very timing of Scripture expressions, and the season of administering ordinances, has been augmentative to the promoting of the faith, and way of justification by Christ, it has made me think that both myself and most of the people of God look over the scriptures too lightly, and take too little notice of that or of those many honors that God for our good has conferred upon Christ. Shall he be called a King, a Priest, a Prophet, a Sacrifice, an Altar, a Captain, a Head, a Husband, a Father, a Fountain, a Door, a Rock, a Lion, a Saviour, &c. and shall we not consider these things? And shall God to all these add moreover, that he is an Advocate, and shall we take no notice thereof; or jumble things so together, that we lose some of his titles and offices; or so be concerned with one, as not to think we have need of the benefit of the rest?

Let us be ashamed thus to do or think, and let us give to him that is thus exalted the glory due unto his name.

Second Use. As we should consider the titles and offices of Christ in general, so *we should consider this of his being an Advocate in particular.* For this is one of the reasons which induced the apostle to present him here under that notion to us, namely, that we should have faith about it, and consider of it to our comfort. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 'An Advocate.' An Advocate, as I said, is one that hath power to plead for another in this, or that, or any court of judicature. Be much therefore in the meditation of Christ, as executing this his office for thee; for many advantages will come to thee thereby. As,

1. This will give thee to see that *thou art not forsaken when thou hast sinned.* And this has not in it a little relief only, but yieldeth consolation in time of need.

There is nothing that we are more prone unto, than to think we are forsaken when we have sinned; when for this very thing, namely, to keep us from thinking so, is the Lord Jesus become our Advocate: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate." Christian! thou that hast sinned, and that with the guilt of thy sin art driven to the brink of hell, I bring thee news from God, thou shalt not die, but live, for thou hast "an Advocate with the Father." Let this therefore be considered by thee, because it yieldeth this fruit.

2. The study of this truth will give thee *ground to take courage to contend with the devil concerning the largeness of grace by faith:* since thy Advocate is contending for thee against him at the bar of God. It is a great encouragement for a man to hold up his head in the country, when he knows he has a special friend at court. Why, our Advocate is a friend at court, a friend there ready to give the onset to Satan, come when he will! "We have an Advocate with the Father;" an Advocate, or one to plead against Satan for us.

3. This consideration will yield *relief when by Satan's abuse of some other of the offices of Christ, thy faith is discouraged and made afraid.* Christ, as a Prophet, pronounces many a dreadful sentence against sin; and Christ as a King, is of power to execute them: and Satan, as an enemy, has subtilty enough to abuse both these, to the almost utter overthrow of the faith of the children of God. But what will he do with him as he is an Advocate? Will he urge that he will plead *against us?* He cannot; he has no such office. "Will he plead against me with his great power? no, but he would put strength into me." Job xxiii. 3–6. Wherefore Satan doth all he may to keep thee ignorant of this office; for he knows that as Advocate, when he is so apprehended, the saints are greatly relieved by him, even by a believing thought of that office.

4. This consideration, or the consideration of Christ as exercising this office, will *help thee to put by that vizor wherewith Christ, by Satan, is misrepresented to thee,* to the weakening and affrighting of thee. There is nothing more common among saints than thus to be wronged by Satan; for as he will labor to fetch fire out of the offices of Christ to burn us; to present him to us with so dreadful and so ireful a countenance, that a man in temptation and under guilt, shall hardly be able to lift up his face to God.

But now, to think really that he is my Advocate, this heals all. Put a vizor upon the face of a father, and it will perhaps for a while fright the child; but let the father speak, let him speak in his own fatherly dialect to the child, and the vizor is gone, if not from the father's face, yet from the child's mind; yea, the child, notwithstanding that vizor, will adventure to creep into its father's bosom! Why, thus it is with the saints when Satan deludes and abuses them, by disfiguring the countenance of Christ to their view. Let them but hear their Lord speak in his own natural dialect, (and then he doth so indeed when we hear

him speak as an advocate,) and their minds are calmed, their thoughts settled, their guilt vanished, and their faith revived.

Indeed the advocateship of Jesus Christ is not much mentioned in the word; and because it is no oftener made mention of, therefore, perhaps, it is that some Christians do so lightly pass it over; when, on the contrary, the rarity of the thing should make it the more admirable. And perhaps it is therefore so little made mention of in the Bible, because it should not be abused by the common sort, but is as it were privately dropped in a corner, to be found by them that are for finding relief for their soul, by a diligent search of the scriptures. For Christ in his office of Advocate is only designed for the child of God; the world hath nothing to do therewith. Methinks, that which alone is proper to saints, and that which by God is peculiarly designed for them, they should be mightily taken withal. The peculiar treasure of kings, the peculiar privilege of saints, Oh! this should be affecting to us. Why, Christ as an Advocate is such. "Remember me, O Lord, (said the Psalmist) with the favor that thou bearest to thy people. O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." Psalm cvi. 4, 5. The Psalmist, you see here, is crying out for a share in, and the knowledge of, the peculiar treasure of saints; and this of Christ, as Advocate, is such. Wherefore study it and prize it so much the more, as this Advocate is ours.

Study it with reference to *its peculiarity*. It is for the children, and nobody else; for the children little and great. This is children's bread, this is a mess for Benjamin, this is to be eaten in the holy place. Children use to make much of that which by way of speciality is by their relations bestowed on them. "And Naboth said to Ahab, the Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers

unto thee." (1 Kings xxi. 3.) 'No, truly will I not.' 'Why so?' 'Because it was my father's gift, not in common to all, but to me in special.'

Study this office in *the nature of it;* for therein lies the excellency of any thing, even in the nature of it? Wrong thoughts of this, abuse it, and take its natural glory from it; take heed, therefore, of misapprehending, while thou art seeking to apprehend Christ as thy Advocate. Men judge of Christ's offices while they are at too great a distance from them. But "let them come near," says God, "let them speak," (Isa. xli. 1;) as Elihu said to his friends, (when he had seen them judge amiss,) "Let us choose to us judgment; let us know among ourselves what is good." Job xxxiv. 4. So say I. Study to know, rightly to know the Advocate-office of Jesus Christ. It is one of the easiest things in the world to miss of the nature, while we speak of the name and offices of Jesus Christ. Wherefore look to it, that thou study the nature of the office of his advocateship, of his advocateship *for*, for so you ought to consider it. There is an Advocate for, not against, the children of God, "Jesus Christ the righteous."

Study this office with reference to *its efficacy and prevalency.* Job says, "After my words they spake not again." Job xxix. 22. And when Christ stands up to plead, all must keep silence before him True, Satan had the first word, but Christ the last, in the business of Joshua, and such a last, as brought the poor man well off though "clothed with filthy garments." Zech. iii. Satan must be speechless after a plea of our Advocate, how rampant soever he is afore; or as Elihu has it, "He was amazed, he answered no more, he left off speaking." Shall he that speaks in righteousness give place, and he who has nothing but envy and deceit be admitted to stand his ground? Behold the angels cover their faces when they speak of his glory. How then shall not Satan bend before him? In the

days of his humiliation, he made him cringe and creep, how much more then now he is exalted to glory, to glory to be an Advocate, an Advocate for his people! "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Study *the faithfulness of Christ in his execution of this office.* For he will not fail nor forsake them that have entertained him for their Advocate. "He will thoroughly plead their cause." Jer. l. 34. 'Faithful and True,' is one of his titles, and you shall be faithfully served by him, you may boldly commit your cause unto him; nor shall the badness of it make him fail, or discourage him in his work; for it is not the badness of a cause that can hinder him from prevailing, because he hath wherewith to answer for all thy sins, and a new law to plead by, through which he will make thee a conqueror. He is also for sticking to a man to the end, if he once engages for him. John xiii. 1, 2. He will threaten and love, he will chastise and love, he will kill and love, and thou shalt find it so. And he will make this appear at the last, and Satan knows it so now; for he feels the power of his repulses while he pleads for thee at the bar against him. And all this is in very faithfulness.

Study also *the need that thou hast of a share* in the execution of the Advocateship of Jesus Christ. Christians find that they have need of washing in the blood of Christ, and that they have need of being clothed with the righteousness of Christ; they also find that they have need that Christ should make intercession for them, and that by him (of necessity) they must approach God, and present their prayers and services to him. But they do not so well see that they need Christ should be their Advocate. And the reason, thereof, is this; they forget that their Adversary makes it his business to accuse them before the throne of God; they consider not the long scrolls and many crimes

wherewith he chargeth them in the presence of the holy angels of God. I say, this is the cause that the advocateship of Christ is so little considered in the churches; yea, many that have been relieved by that office of his, have not understood what he has hereby done for them.

But, perhaps, this is to be kept from many till they come to behold his face, and till all things shall be revealed; that Christ might have glory given him in the next world, for doing that for them which they so little thought of in this. But do not thou be content with this ignorance, because the knowledge of his advocating it for thee will yield thee present relief. Study, therefore, thine own weakness, the holiness of the Judge, the badness of thy cause, the subtilty, malice, and rage of thine enemy; and, be assured, that whenever thou sinnest, by and by thou art for it accused before God, at his judgment-seat. These things will, as it were by way of necessity, instil into thy heart the need thou hast of an Advocate; and will make thee look, as to the blood and righteousness of Christ to justify thee, so to Christ as an Advocate to plead thy cause, as did holy Job in his distresses. Job. xvi. 21.

Third Use. Is Christ Jesus not only a Priest and a King over, but an Advocate for his people. *Let this make us stand and wonder, and be amazed at his humiliation and condescension.* We read of his humiliation on earth when he put himself into our flesh, took upon him our sins, and made them as his own unto condemnation and death. And to be an Advocate, is an office reproachful to the malicious, if any man be such a one, for those that are base and unworthy. Yea, the higher and more honorable the person is that pleads for such, the more he humbles himself. The word doth often in effect count him now in heaven as a servant for us; and acts of service are acts of condescension. And I am sure some acts of service have more of that in them than others; and, I think, when all things are con-

sidered, that Christ neither doth, nor can do any thing for us there, of a more condescending nature than to become our Advocate. True, he glories in it; but that doth not show that the work is excellent in itself. It is also one of his titles of honor; but that is to show how highly God esteems and dignifies all his acts; and though this shall tend at last to the greatening of his honor, and glory of his kingdom, yet the work itself is amazingly mean.

I speak after the manner of men: it is counted so in this world. How base and ignoble doth a man make himself, especially to his enemy, when he undertakes to plead a bad cause, if it happens to be the cause of the base and unworthy! And I am sure we are so in ourselves, for whom he is become an Advocate with the Father. True, we are made worthy in him; but that is no thanks to us; as to ourselves and our cause, both are bad enough. Let us now leave off disputing, and stand amazed at his condescension. "He humbleth himself to behold things that are done in heaven;" (Psalm cxiii. 4–6;) and men of old did use to wonder to think that God should so much stoop, as to open his eyes to look upon man, or so much as to once mind him. Job. xiv. 1–3; vii. 17; Psalm viii. 4; cxliv. 3. And if these be acts that bespeak a condescension, what will you count of Christ's standing up as an Advocate, to plead the cause of his people? Must not that be much more so accounted? O the condescension of Christ in heaven! While cavillers quarrel at such kind of language, let the saints stay themselves and wonder at it, and be so much the more affected with his grace. The persons are base, and the crimes bad wherewith they are charged, wherefore one would think it is a great condescension of Christ to take upon him to be an Advocate for such people.

This is so, especially if you consider the openness of this work of Christ; for this thing is not done in a corner, but is done in open court.

1. Consider it is *with a holy and just God.* For he is the Judge of all, and his eyes are purer than to behold iniquity; yea, his very presence is a consuming fire. Yet before and with this God, and that for such a people, Jesus Christ will be an Advocate. For one mean man to be an Advocate for the base, with one that is not considerate, is not so much; but for Christ to be an Advocate for the base, and for the base too under the basest consideration, this is to be wondered at. When Bathsheba the queen became an advocate for Adonijah, unto King Solomon, you see how he flounced at her, because the cause was bad. "And why (saith he) dost thou ask Abishag for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also." 1 Kings ii. 16–23. I told you before, that, to be an advocate did run one upon hazards of reproach; and it may easily be thought that the queen did blush, when from the king her son she received such a repulse; nor do we hear any more of her being an advocate. I believe she had enough of this. But Oh! this Christ of God, who himself is greater than Solomon, he is become an Advocate, "an Advocate with the Father," who is the eternally just, and holy, and righteous God; and that for a people, with respect to him, far worse than could be Adonijah in the eyes of his brother Solomon! Majesty and justice are dreadful in themselves, and much more so when approached by any; especially when the cause, as to matter of fact is bad that the man is guilty of, who is concerned in the advocateship of his friend; and yet Jesus Christ is still an Advocate for us, "an Advocate with the Father!"

2. Consider also *before whom* Jesus Christ doth plead as an Advocate; and that is before, or in the presence and observation of all the heavenly host. For whilst Christ pleadeth with God for his people, all the host of heaven stands by, on the right hand and on the left. 1 Kings xxii. 19. And though as yet there may seem to be but little in this consideration; yet Christ would have us know, and

account it an infinite kindness of his to us, that he will confess and not be ashamed of us before the angels of his Father. Luke xii. 8, 9. Angels are holy and glorious creatures, and in some respects may have a greater knowledge of the nature and baseness of sin than we, while here, are capable of; and so may be made to stand and wonder, while the Advocate pleads with God for a people from head to foot clothed therewith. But Christ will not be ashamed to stand up for us before them, though they know how bad we are, and what vile things we have done. Let this therefore make us wonder.

3. Add to these, *how unconcerned ofttimes those are* with themselves, and their own desolate condition, for whom Christ, as an Advocate, laboreth in heaven with God. Alas, the soul is as far off of knowing what the devil is doing against it at God's bar, as David was, when Saul was threatening to have his blood, while he was hid in the field. 1 Sam. xx. 26–32. But O, true Jonathan, how didst thou plead for David! Only here thou hadst the advantage of our Advocate, thou hadst a good cause to plead; for when Saul thy father said, "David shall surely die," thy reply was, "Wherefore shall he be slain? What evil hath he done?" But Christ cannot say thus, when he pleadeth for us at God's bar, nor is our present senselessness and unconcern about his pleading any thing, but an aggravation to our sin. Perhaps David was praying, while Jonathan was playing the advocate for him before the king his father; but perhaps the saint is sleeping, yea sinning more, whilst Christ is pleading for him in heaven! Oh! this should greatly affect us, this should make us wonder; this should be so considered by us, to heighten our souls to admiration of the grace and kindness of Christ.

4. Join to these *the greatness and gravity*, the highness and glorious majesty of the man that is become our Advo-

cate. Says the text, it is Jesus Christ. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ."

Now, that he should become an Advocate, that he should embrace such an employ as this of his advocateship, let this be a wonderment, and so be accounted. But let us come to the fourth use.

Fourth Use. Is it so? Is Jesus Christ the Saviour also become our Advocate? Then *let us labor to make such improvement of this doctrine, as tendeth to strengthen our graces, and us in the management of them.* Indeed this should be the use that we should make of all the offices of Christ. But let us at this time concern ourselves about this; let, I say, the poor Christian thus expostulate with himself:

1. Is Christ Jesus, the Lord, mine Advocate with the Father? Then awake, my faith, and shake thyself like a giant: stir up thyself, and be not faint! Christ is the Advocate of his people. And as for sin, which is one great stumble to thy actings, O my faith, Christ has not only died for that as a sacrifice, nor only carried his sacrifice unto the Father, into the holiest of all, but is there to manage that offering as an Advocate, pleading the efficacy and worth thereof before God, against the devil, for us.

Thus, I say, we should *strengthen our faith;* for faith has to do not only with the word, but also with the offices of Christ. Besides, considering how many the assaults are that are made upon our faith, we find all little enough to support it against all the wiles of the devil.

Christians too little concern themselves, as I have said, with the offices of Jesus Christ, and therefore their knowledge of him is so little, and their faith in him so weak. We are bid to have our conversation in heaven; and that a man so hath, when he is there in his spirit by faith, observing how the Lord Jesus doth exercise his offices there for him. Let us often, by faith, go to the bar of God, there to hear our Advocate plead our cause. We should often have our faith

going to God's judgment-seat, because we are concerned there; there we are accused of the devil, there we have our crimes laid open, and there we have our Advocate to plead. And this is suggested in the text, for it saith, "We have an Advocate with the Father;" therefore thither our faith should go for help and relief in the day of our straits. I say, we should have our faith approach to God's judgment-seat, and show it there by the glass of our text, what Satan is doing against, and the Lord Jesus for our souls. We should also show how the Lord Jesus carries away every cause from the devil, and from before the judgment-seat, to the comfort of the children, the joy of angels, and the shame of the enemy. This would strengthen and support our faith indeed, and would make us more able than for the most part we are, to apply the grace of God to ourselves, and hereafter to give more strong repulses to Satan. It is easy with a man, when he knows that his advocate has overthrown his enemy at the King's Bench bar, or court of common pleas, less to fear him the next time he sees him, and more boldly to answer him when he reneweth his threats again. Let faith then be strengthened, from its being exercised about the advocateship of Jesus Christ.

2. As we should make use of Christ's advocateship for strengthening our faith, so we should also make use thereof to *encourage us to prayer*. As our faith is, so is our prayer, namely, cold, weak, and doubtful. When faith cannot apprehend our access to the Father by Christ, or that we have an Advocate, when charged before God for our sins by the devil, then we lag and faint in our prayer; but when we begin to take courage and believe, (and we do so when most clearly we apprehend Christ,) then we get up in prayer. And according as a man apprehends Christ in his undertakings and offices, so he will wrestle with and supplicate God. As, suppose a man believes Christ died for his sins, why then, he will plead that in prayer with God. Suppose also, that a man

understands that Christ rose again for his justification, why then, he will also plead that in prayer; but if he knows no more, no farther will he go. But when he shall know that there is also for him an Advocate with the Father, and that that Advocate is Jesus Christ; and when the glory of this office of Christ shall shine in the face of this man's soul, then he prays with that courage he had not before; yea, then is his faith so supported and strengthened, that his prayer is much more fervent and importuning.

So that, I say, the knowledge of the advocateship of Christ is very useful to strengthen our graces; and as of graces in general, so of faith and prayer in particular. Wherefore our wisdom is, so to improve this doctrine, that prayer may be strengthened thereby.

3. As we should make use of this doctrine to strengthen faith and prayer, so we should make use of it to *keep us humble.* For the more offices Christ executeth for us with the Father, the greater sign that we are bad; and the more we see our badness, the more humble should we be. Christ gave for us the price of blood; but that is not all. Christ as a Captain has conquered death and the grave for us; but that is not all. Christ as a Priest intercedes for us in heaven; but that is not all. Sin is still in us, with us, and mixes itself with whatever we do, whether what we do be religious or civil; for not only our prayers and sermons, our hearing, preaching, &c., but our houses, shops, trades, and beds, are all polluted with sin. Nor doth the devil (our night and day adversary) forbear to tell our bad deeds to our Father, urging that we might for ever be disinherited for this. And what should we now do, if we had not an Advocate? yea, if we had not one to plead *in forma pauperis?* yea, if we had not one that could prevail, and that would faithfully execute that office for us? Why, we must die. But since we are rescued by him, let us, as to ourselves, lay our hand upon our mouth, and be silent, and say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,

but unto thy name give glory." And I say again, since the Lord Jesus runs through so many offices for us, before he can bring us to glory, how low, how little, how vile and base in our own eyes, should we be!

It is a shame for a Christian to think highly of himself; since Christ is fain to do so much for him, and he again not at all able to make him amends. But some, whose riches consist in nothing but scabs and lice, will yet have lofty looks!

But are they not much to blame who sit lifting up lofty eyes in the house, and yet know not how to turn their hand to do any thing so, but that another, their betters, must come and mend their work? I say, is it not fitter that such should look, speak, and act, as such that declare a sense of their unhandiness, and their shame for their unprofitableness? Yea, is it not meet that to every one they should confess what sorry ones they are? I am sure it should be thus with Christians; and God is angry when it is otherwise. Nor doth it become these helpless ones to lift up themselves. Let Christ's advocateship therefore teach them to be humble.

4. As we should improve this doctrine to strengthen faith, to encourage prayer, and keep us humble, so we should make use of it to *encourage perseverance*; that is, to hold out to the end; for, for all those causes, the apostle setteth Christ before us as an Advocate. There is nothing more discourages the truly godly than the sense of their own infirmities, (as has been hinted all along,) consequently nothing can more encourage them to go on, than to think that Christ is an Advocate for them. The services also that Christ has for us to do in this world are full of difficulty, and so apt to discourage. But when a Christian shall come to understand that (if we do what we can) it is not a failing either in matter or manner that shall render it wholly unserviceable, or give the devil that advantage to plead thereby as to prevail for our condemnation and rejection; but that Christ, by being our

Advocate, saves us from falling short, as also from the rage of hell;—this will encourage us to hold on, though we do but hobble in all our goings, and fumble in all our doings; for we have Christ for an Advocate, in case we sin in the management of any duty. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Let us therefore go on in all God's ways as well as we can for our hearts; and when our foot slips, let us tell God of it, and his mercy in Christ shall hold us up.

Darkness, and to be shut up in prison, are also great discouragement to us. But our Advocate is for giving us light, and for fetching us out of our prison. True, he that Joseph chose to be his advocate with Pharoah remembered not Joseph, but forgat him; (Gen. xl. 14, 23;) but he that has Jesus Christ to be his Advocate shall be remembered before God. "He remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever." Psalm cxxxvi. 23; Micah vii. 8–10. Yea, he will say to the prisoners, Show yourselves; and to them that are in the prison-house, Go forth.

Satan sometimes gets the saints into the prison when he has taken them captive by their lusts. Rom. vii. 23. But they shall not be always there. And this should encourage us to go on in godly ways; for we must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Objection: 'But I cannot pray,' says one, 'therefore how should I persevere? When I go to prayer, instead of praying, my mouth is stopped. What would you have me to do?'

Well, soul, though Satan may baffle thee, he cannot so serve thy Advocate. If thou must not speak for thyself, Christ thine Advocate can speak for thee. Lemuel was to open his mouth for the dumb, namely, for the sons of destruction, and to plead the cause of the poor and needy. Prov. xxxi. 8, 9. If we knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as the word reveals it, we would believe, we would

hope, and would, notwithstanding all discouragements, wait for the salvation of the Lord. But there are many things that hinder; wherefore faith, perseverance, and prayer, are made difficult things to us. "But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace," was once a good word to me when I could not pray.

5. As we should apply this doctrine for the improvement and encouragement of these graces, so we should improve it to the driving away difficulties before us, *to the getting ground upon the enemy.* Resist the devil; drive him back; this is what the Lord Jesus is an Advocate with God in heaven for, and for the sake of which thou art made a believer on earth. 1 Peter v. 9; Heb. xii.

Wherefore has God put this sword, "We have an Advocate," into thy hand, but to fight thy way through the world? Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, and say, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God. And since I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, I will not despair, though the iniquity of my heels should compass me about.' Psalm xlix. 5.

Fifth Use. Doth Jesus Christ stand up to plead for us with God against the devil? *Let it teach us to stand up to plead for him before men*; to plead for him against the enemies of his person and gospel. This is but reasonable; for if Christ stands up to plead for us, why should not we get up and plead for him? He also expects this at our hands saying, "Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" The apostle did it, and counted himself obliged to do it, saying, that he preached the gospel of God with much contention. 1 Thess. ii. 2. Nor is this the duty of apostles or preachers only; but every child of God should "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." Jude 3.

And, as I said, there is reason why we should do this. He standeth up boldly for us. And if we,

1. Consider the disparity of persons to plead with, it will seem far more reasonable. He stands up to plead with God; we stand up to plead with men. The dread of God is great, yea, greater than the dread of men.

2. If we consider the persons pleaded for. He pleads for sinners, for the inconsiderable, vile, and base; we plead for Jesus, for the great, holy, and honorable. It is an honor for the poor to stand up for the great and mighty; but what honor is it for the great to plead for the base? Reason therefore requireth that we stand up to plead for him, though there can be but little rendered why he should stand up to plead for us.

3. He standeth up to plead for us in the most holy place, though we are vile; and why should we not stand up for him in this vile world, since he is holy?

4. He pleads for us, though our cause is bad; why should not we plead for him, since his cause is good? He pleads for us against fallen angels; why should not we plead for him against sinful vanities? He pleads for us to save our souls; why should not we plead for him to sanctify his name? He pleads for us before the holy angels; why should not we plead for him before princes? He is not ashamed of us, though now in heaven; why should we be ashamed of him before this adulterous and sinful generation? He is unwearied in his pleading for us; why should we faint and be dismayed while we plead for him?

My brethren, is it not reasonable we should stand up for him in this world? Yea, is it not reason that in all things we should study his exaltation here, since he in all things contrives our honor and glory in heaven? A child of God should study, in every one of his relations, to serve the Lord Christ in this world, because Christ, by the execution of every one of his offices seeks our promotion hereafter.

If these be not sufficient arguments to bow us to yield up our members, ourselves, our whole selves to God that we may be servants of righteousness unto him; yea, if by these and such like, we are not made willing to stand up for him before men, it is a sign that there is but little, if any, of the grace of God in our hearts.

Yea, further, that we should have now, at last, in reserve, Christ as authorized to be our Advocate to plead for us; for this is the last of his offices for us while we are here, and is to be put in practice for us when there are more than ordinary occasions; this is to help, as we say, at a dead lift. Even then when a Christian is taken for a captive, or when he sinks into the mire, where is no standing, or when he is clothed with filthy garments, or when the devil doth desperately plead against us our evil deeds, or when by our lives we have made our salvation questionable, and have forfeited our evidences for heaven. And why then should not we have also in reserve for Christ? And when profession and confession will not do, when loss of goods and a prison will not do, then to bring it in,—then to bring it in as the reserve, and as that which will do,—willingly to lay down our lives for his name? Isa. xxiv. 15; John xxi. 19. And since he doth his part without grudging for us, let us do ours with rejoicing for him!

Sixth Use. Doth Jesus Christ stand up to plead for us, and that of his mere grace and love? Then *this should teach Christians to be watchful and wary how they sin against God.* This inference seems to run retrograde; but whoso duly considers it, will find it fairly fetched from the premises. Christianity teaches ingenuousness and aptness to be sensible of kindnesses, and doth instruct us to a loathness to be overhard upon him from whom we have all a free-cost. Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. Shall we do evil that good may come? God forbid. Shall

we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. Rom. vi. 1, 2, 15.

It is the most disingenuous thing in the world not to care how chargeable we are to that friend that bestows all upon us gratis. When Mephibosheth had an opportunity to be yet more chargeable to David, he would not, because he ventured his life and his all. 2 Sam. xix. 24–28. Also Christ's care is as much for his household, yet he has neither fee nor income for it; nor doth he desire aught of us, but to accept of his free doing for us thankfully; wherefore, let us put him upon this work as little as may be, and by so doing we shall show ourselves Christians of the right make and stamp. We count him but a fellow of a very gross spirit that will therefore be lavishing of what is his friend's, because it is prepared of mere kindness for him. Esau himself was loath to do this, and shall Christians be disingenuous?

I dare say, if Christians were sober, watchful, and of a more self-denying temper, they need not put the Lord Jesus to that, to which for the want of these things they do often put him. I know he is not unwilling to serve us; but I know also that the love of Christ should constrain us to live not to ourselves, but to him that loved us, that died for us, and rose again. 2 Cor. v. 14. We shall do that which is naught too much, even then when we watch and take care what we can to prevent it. Our flesh, when we do our utmost diligence to resist it, will defile both us and our best performances. We need not lay the reins on its neck, and say, 'What care we? The more sin the more grace, and the more we shall see the kindness of Christ and what virtue there is in his Advocate's office to save us.' Besides, as nothing so swayeth with us as love, so there is nothing so well pleasing to God as it. Let a man love, though he has opportunity to do nothing, it is accepted by the God of heaven. But where there is no

love, let a man do what he will, it is not at all regarded. 1 Cor. xiii. 1–3. Now, to be careless and negligent, and that from a supposed understanding of the grace of Christ in the exercise of his advocateship for us in heaven, is a clear sign as can be, that in thy heart there is no love to Christ, and that consequently thou art a just nothing, instead of being a Christian.

Talk then what thou wilt, and profess ever so largely, Christ is no Advocate of thine, nor shalt thou, thou so continuing, be ever the better for any of those pleas that Christ at God's bar puts in, against the devil, for his people.

Christians! Christ Jesus is not unwilling to lay out himself for you in heaven, nor to be an Advocate for you in the presence of his Father. But yet he is unwilling that you should render him evil for good. I say, that you should do so by your remissness and carelessness, for want of such a thinking of things as may affect your hearts therewith. It would be more comely in you, would please him better, would better agree with your profession, and also better would prove you gracious, to be found in the performance of these conclusions. "How shall they that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify, therefore, your members, which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

I say, it would be more comely for Christians to say, 'We will not sin, because God will pardon: we will not commit iniquity, because Christ will advocate for us.' "I write unto you, that you sin not," though, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." Why, the brute will conclude, 'I will not do so, because my master will beat

me; I will do thus, for then my master will love me:' and Christians should be above men, brutish men!

And for a conclusion, as to this, let me present you with three considerations. 1. Know that it is the nature of grace to draw holy arguments to move to goodness of life, from the love and goodness of God, but, not thence to be remiss. 2 Cor. v. 14. 2. Know therefore, that they have no grace that find not these effects of the discoveries of the love and goodness of God. 3. Know also, that among all the swarms of professors that from age to age make mention of the name of Christ, they only must dwell with him in heaven that depart from iniquity. 2 Tim. ii. 19. And such only are sanctified as he hath redeemed to himself, by faith in him. Acts xxvi. 18.

Seventh Use. Is it so? Is Jesus Christ an Advocate with the Father for us? Then *this should encourage strong Christians to tell the weak ones where, when they are in their temptations and fears through sin, they may have one to plead their cause.* Thus the Apostle doth by the text; and thus we should do one to another. Mark, he telleth the weak of an Advocate. "My little children, I write unto you," &c.

Christians, when they would comfort their dejected brethren, talk too much at rovers, or in generals. They should be more at the mark. "A word spoken in season, how good is it!" I say Christians should observe and inquire that they may observe the cause or ground of their brother's trouble; and having first taken notice of that, in the next place, consider under which of the offices of Jesus Christ this sin or trouble has cast this man; and so labor to apply Christ in the word of the gospel to him. Sometimes we are bid to consider him as an Apostle and High-priest, and sometimes as a Forerunner and an Advocate. And he has, as we said before, these divers offices, with others, that we by the consideration of him might be relieved under our manifold temptations. This, as I said,

I perceive John teaches us here, as he doth a little before of his being a Sacrifice for us. For he presenteth them that after conversion shall sin, with Christ as an Advocate with the Father. As if he should say, My brethren, are you tempted, are you accused, have you sinned, has Satan prevailed against you? "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Thus we should do, and deliver our brother from death. There is nothing that Satan more desires than to get good men in his sieve to sift them as wheat, that if possible he may leave them nothing but bran, no grace, but the very husk and shell of religion. And when a Christian comes to know this, should Christ as Advocate be hid, what could bear him up? But let him now remember and believe that "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," and he forthwith conceiveth comfort; for an Advocate is to plead for me according as has been shown afore, that I may be delivered from the wrath and accusation of my adversary, and still be kept safe under grace.

Further, by telling my brother that he hath an Advocate, I put things into his mind that he has not known, or do bring them into remembrance which he has forgotten; namely, that though he hath sinned, he shall be saved in a way of justice. For an Advocate is to plead justice and law, and Christ is to plead these for a saint that has sinned; yea, so to plead them, that he may be saved. This being so-he is made to perceive that by law he must have his sins forgiven him; that by justice he must be justified. For Christ as an Advocate pleadeth for justice, justice to himself; and this, saint, is of himself, "a member of his body, of his flesh and of his bones."

Nor has Satan so good a right to plead justice against us, though we have sinned, that we might be damned, as Christ has to plead it, though we have sinned, that we might be saved. For sin cannot cry so loud to justice, as can the

blood of Christ. And he pleads his blood as an Advocate, by which he has answered the law; wherefore the law having nothing to object, must needs acquit the man for whom the Lord Jesus pleads. I conclude, this with that of the Psalmist, "Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps."

Eighth Use. But what is all this to you that are not concerned in this privilege? The children of God indeed have the advantage of an Advocate; *but what is this to them that have none to plead their cause?* Jer xxx. 12, 13. They are, as we say, left to the wide world, or to be ground to powder between the justice of God and the sins which they have committed. This is the man that none but the devil seeks after; that is pursued by the law, and sin, and death, and has none to plead his cause!

It is sad to consider the plight that such a one is in. His Accuser is appointed, yea, ordered to bring in a charge against him. "Let Satan stand at his right hand, (in the place where accusers stand;) and when he shall be judged, let him be condemned." Let there be none to plead for his deliverance. If he cries or offereth to cry out for mercy or forgiveness, "Let his prayer become sin." Psalm cxi. 6. 7. This is the portion of a wicked man. "Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and, as a storm, hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place." Job xxvii. 20–23. And what shall

this man do? Can he withstand the charge, the accusation, the sentence, and condemnation? No, he has none to plead his cause. I remember, that somewhere I have read, as I think, concerning one, who when he was carrying upon men's shoulders to the grave, cried out as he lay upon the bier, 'I am accused before the just judgment of God!' and a while after, 'I am condemned before the just judgment of God!' Nor was this man loose but strict as to the religion that was then on foot in the world. But all the religion of the world amounts to no more than nothing, (I mean as to eternal salvation,) if any man be denied an advocate to plead their cause with God. Nor can any advocate, save Jesus Christ the righteous, avail any thing at all, because there is none appointed but him to that work, and therefore not to be admitted to enter a plea, for their client, at the bar of God.

Objection. But some may say, 'There is God's grace, the promise, Christ's blood, and his second part of priesthood now in heaven. Can none of these severally, nor all of them jointly, save a man from hell, unless Christ becomes our Advocate?'

Answer. All these, his Advocate's office not excluded, are few enough, and little enough, to save the saints from hell. For the righteous shall "scarcely be saved." 1 Pet. iv. 18. There must then be the promise, God's grace, Christ's blood, and him to advocate too, or we cannot be saved. What is the promise without God's grace, and what is that grace without a promise to bestow it upon us. I say, what benefit have we thereby? Besides, if the promise and God's grace, without Christ's blood, would have saved us, wherefore then did Christ die? Yea, and again I say, if all these, without his being an Advocate for us, would have delivered us from all those disadvantages that our sins and infirmities would bring us to, and into; surely in vain and to no purpose was Jesus made an Advocate. But, soul,

there is need of all, and therefore be not thou offended that the Lord Jesus is of the Father made so much to his; but rather admire and wonder that the Father and the Son should be so concerned with so sorry a lump of dust and ashes as thou art. And I say again, be confounded to think that sin should be a thing so horrible, of such power to pollute, to captivate and detain us from God, that without all this ado, (I would speak with reverence of God and his wisdom,) we cannot be delivered from the everlasting destruction that it hath brought upon the children of men.

But I say, what is this to them that are not admitted to a privilege in the Advocate-office of Christ? Whether he is an Advocate or no, the case to them is the same. True, Christ as a Saviour is not divided! He that hath him not in all, shall have him in none at all of his offices in a saving manner. Therefore he for whom he is not an Advocate, he is nothing, as to eternal life.

Indeed Christ, by some of his offices, is concerned for the elect, before by some other of them he is. But such shall have the blessing of them all before they come to glory. Nor hath a man ground to say, 'Christ is here or there mine,' before he has ground to say, 'He also is mine Advocate;' though that office of his, as has been already shown, stands in the last place, and comes in as a reserve. But can any imagine that Christ will pray for them as Priest, for whom he will not plead as Advocate? or that he will speak for them to God, for whom he will not plead against the devil? No, no; they are his own that he 'loveth to the end'—(John xiii.)—to the end of their lives, to the end of their sins, to the end of their temptations, to the end of their fears, and of the exercise of the rage and malice of Satan against them! 'To the end,' may also be understood, even until he had given them the profit and benefit of all his offices in their due exercise and administration. But I say, what is all this to them that have him not for their Advocate?

You may remember, that I have already told you, that there are several classes who have not the Lord Jesus for their Advocate; namely, those that are still in their sins pursuing their lusts; those that are ashamed of him before men; and those that are never otherwise but lukewarm in their profession. And let us now, for a conclusion make further inquiry into this matter.

Is it likely that those should have the Lord Jesus for their Advocate, to plead their cause, who despise and reject his person, his word, and ways? or those either, who are so far off from sense of and shame for sin, that it is the only thing they hug and embrace? True, he pleadeth the cause of his people, both with the Father, and against the devil and all the world besides; but open profaneness, shame of good, and without heart or warmth in religion, are no characters of his people.

It is irrational to think that Christ is an Advocate for, or that he pleadeth the cause of such, who in the self-same hour, and before his enemies, are throwing dirt in his face, by their profane mouths and unsanctified lives and conversations.

If he pleads as an Advocate for any, he must plead against Satan for them, and so consequently must have some special bottom to ground his plea upon. I say, a bottom better than that upon which the carnal man stands. Which bottom is either some special relation that this man stands in to God, or some special law he hath privilege by; that he may have some ground for an appeal, if need be, to the justice and righteousness of God. But none of these things belong to them that are dead in trespasses and sins. They stand in no special relation to God; they are not privileged by the law of grace.

Objection. 'But doth not Christ as Advocate plead for his elect, though not called as yet?'

Answer. He died for all his elect, he prayeth for all his elect as a Priest; but as an ADVOCATE he pleadeth only for

the children, the CALLED only. Satan objecteth not against God's election, for he knows it not; but he objecteth against the called, namely, whether they be truly godly or not, or, whether they ought not to die for their transgressions. Zech. iii. And for these things he has some color to feign an accusation against us; and now it is time enough for Christ to stand up to plead. I say, for these things he has some color to frame a plea against us; for there is sin, and a law of works, and a Judge too that has not respect of persons. Now, to overthrow this plea of Satan is Jesus Christ our Advocate; yea, to overthrow it by pleading law and justice; and this must be done with respect to the children only. "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

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